

The History of James Radford Millard and His Wife Catherine Richards

Chapter 7: Life in Early Farmington

In 1869 Celia began attending school in Farmington. The adobe schoolhouse the students' fathers had built was not far from the Millard home. All the students in town met in its one large room, although in 1875 the town citizens added a rock addition.. The wooden seats and desks were built by the townsmen and were permanently set in place in tiers on the east and west sides of the room, with the boys on the east and the girls on the west, and the door facing south. The older students sat on the higher rows, and Celia's first desk was on the lower front of the west side. A young British convert, James T. Smith, was the teacher, and his desk was on the north end. In the center, a wood-burning stove kept the students warm.

Many of the students attending this school were the children of the numerous local polygamous families. Twelve of Elder Richards' children were of school age at this time. Many of Bishop Robinson's grandchildren, most belonging to large polygamous families, attended this school, including Loren, Oliver's son, who was born in 1859. Horton Haight's children attended this school, including his second daughter, Keturah, born in 1860. Thomas Grover had at least a dozen children attending this school for many years, including Walter and his siblings.

In March of 1869, a terrible epidemic of black measles spread through the area. Some of the students broke out right in class. Brother Smith would bundle them up as best as he could and send them home, but some never returned. Sadly, the teacher's wife Mary contracted this deadly disease and did not survive, leaving Brother Smith with four young children. Within a two week period, fifteen people died in Farmington.

Celia contracted this dread disease later that summer, but she recovered and was able to attend school the next fall. Brother Smith soon married a young Norwegian convert who ultimately had thirteen children in addition to raising his first wife's children.¹

School classes for younger children were held in the summers and Celia attended those. Brother Smith farmed in the summers, and young mothers taught the children's classes. Of course, instruction and learning took place in the Millard home, also. Catherine taught many lessons on truthfulness, and both parents instilled a deep faith in prayer.

In its early days, Farmington residents worked to build the community, but resources were limited and the pioneers made do with what they had. Even the smallest scrap of fat from animals was saved for soap and for rendering into tallow for candles. The Millard family had two candle molds, one of which made twelve candles at a time. They first threaded the mold with string for the wick and then poured in the tallow. Celia commented that it was a challenge to remove the candles from the molds without cracking them.

For many years Catherine did not have access to sugar, so she used molasses which was locally produced by their neighbors, the Bourne family. Celia remembered with fondness the wonderful cakes, cookies, candy and preserves her mother made.

Ice was harvested with large saws from a lagoon three miles north where it was stored in sawdust in an ice house. It was then sold to Farmington residents and storekeepers to keep perishables cold. During the winter Lagoon was popular skating pond.

While lengthy freight trains pulled by oxen continued to bring merchandise into the valley, the merchants expected cash, and once the money from the gold rush was used up, gold currency was difficult to acquire. So, Farmington residents bartered many of their own goods between themselves, saving cash for the necessities from the merchants. President Young created paper currency for use in Utah, even for five and ten cent amounts.

Celia remembered that thread cost twenty-five cents and was sold in skeins, not spools. Catherine had never learned to knit, but she made sure that her daughters learned how to knit their own stockings and make lace for their slips and underwear. Once they had made the lace, Catherine sewed it in place.

Catherine cared very much that her children were clean not just in body, but in mind. She was kind to everyone and often sent her children to the neighbors' homes with fresh butter or a nice cake, cookies, or loaves of bread she had baked. She sent fresh fruit and baked goods to the sick and old people in Farmington. By example, she taught her children to be kind to others.

A line she often quoted when teaching her children about honesty was, "Don't ever tell a lie, for a person who lies is worse than a thief, for you can watch a thief but you cannot watch a liar."

Catherine was a happy person and often found the time to join her children in their games. She would find treats for their play dinners, especially when neighbor children were visiting. Catherine had tremendous sympathy for children in the neighborhood who weren't as fortunate as her family. If the ward was holding a children's party, Catherine would gather the poorer neighbors, wash their hands and faces and then comb their hair. She would often take clothing belonging to her own children to make sure her little neighbors were dressed properly.

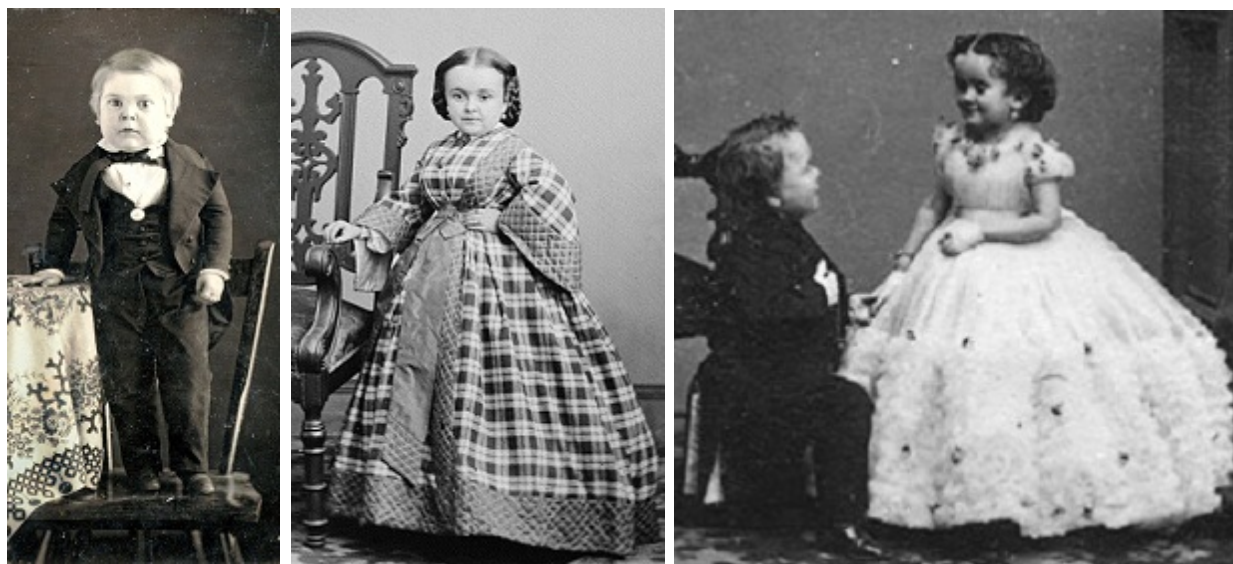
James, Catherine and the residents of Farmington heeded President Young's counsel to be kind to the Native Americans, and this attitude was passed on to their children. Celia remembered watching the native tribes pass through town and later wrote, "I have watched them when there would be so many of them in one band that it would take a whole day for them to get through the little town of Farmington. They mostly went in single file. The big Chief Indians would be in the lead on their horses with nothing to hold but a gun or bow and arrows. The women would be on top of a load on their horses with their babies on their backs and the rest of the little ones on folded tents. All the rest of their belongings would be on a skid made of the tent poles and fastened on each side of the horse she was on. A few of the men would be in the rear and they were always on the lookout for the other tribes of unfriendly Indians. That was why the men never were hampered with a load."²

Interestingly, Celia added this, "Animals of the white people, such as cows, horses, and especially mules were very afraid of the Indians. They knew when the Indians were coming before the people did. Just animal instinct, as none of the animals had been in an Indian War."

The Millard children attended Sunday School each week. Celia's first teacher was Florence Adelia Smith, a teenage daughter with sixteen siblings, children of faithful American converts. Sundays were special days in the Millard home.

Celia wrote, "On Sunday mornings everything seemed so quiet and peaceful in those pioneer homes. All unnecessary work was laid aside. . . On Sunday morning mother would get us all ready for Sunday School early so Father could take us for a nature walk, he would call it, before we went to Sunday School. We would go to the fields and he would tell us all about the birds and the plants, and he would always give us something to memorize during the week, either a poem or a hymn or a chapter from the bible and then if it was a rainy morning the next Sunday, we had a home program."

While the infrastructure of Farmington was still growing, the residents were educated and enjoyed cultural events and performed numerous plays and musicals. When Celia was still a very young child, she witnessed the visit of Lavinia and Minnie Warren, accompanied by Tom Thumb and Commodore Nutt, their husbands, all little people, with Minnie being under thirty inches tall. Minnie and Lavinia were both descendants of Mayflower immigrants whose families had intermarried many times over, perpetuating a pituitary gland defect which caused their small sizes. They were educated and raised as their larger siblings were, but ultimately became associated with P. T. Barnum who toured with them throughout America and Europe. The couples socialized with American presidents and were introduced to European royalty, living wealthy lives with tremendous opportunity. Their visit to Farmington had an impact on Celia, who was likely seven when they came to Utah, most likely in 1869 when the train line was completed.



Phineas T. Barnum was a distant relative of General Tom Thumb, left, and taught him to sing, act and impersonate famous people. In 1863 General Thumb married Lavinia Warren, center. Lavinia's sister Minnie later married Commodore Nutt, far right. The group toured the United States and Europe, being hosted by President Lincoln and Queen Victoria and were among the most well-known celebrities of the 19th century. Their visit to Utah, likely after the train line was completed in 1869, thrilled young Celia Millard.

On another occasion about this time, Thomas Giles, a harpist, brought a group of singers to Farmington for a performance. Brother Giles and Catherine had been acquainted in Wales, where

they had both joined the LDS Church. In Wales Brother Giles had been a coal miner, but he was injured in an accident which cost him his vision. Sightless, he crossed the ocean, joined a handcart company and crossed the plains with his family. His wife and an infant died on the trek. Brother Giles remarried and then traveled throughout Utah, performing for many groups. On this particular occasion, Brother Giles performed in the Millard home, with Catherine inviting her neighbors and friends to hear the beautiful music. Brother Giles had a wonderful voice and sang as he played; his group often performing light-hearted songs which the pioneers enjoyed.

James owned two oxen, Buck and Brandy, who made a fine team. Several times James was called to use his team to haul granite blocks from Little Cottonwood Canyon to Temple Square as workers laid the foundation of the Salt Lake Temple. One day the family traveled to the Great Salt Lake to visit some close friends. Oxen are generally sturdy, gentle animals and are not guided by the driver with harnesses and reins. Instead, the oxen were yoked together, and a wooden tongue connected the yoke to the wagon bed. That day the family left the wagon box at home. James placed boards across the axles and Catherine covered these with quilts upon which the children sat. As the family passed the cemetery in Farmington heading south on Second East, a large stage coach pulled by four horses approached them from behind on its way to Salt Lake City. The driver was a large man and his companion on the seat next to him, riding shotgun, carried a rifle on his lap to protect the passengers and any valuables. The children watched the stage close in on James' slow wagon. The driver called out, "Now, for the race!"

James was ready for the challenge. He stood on his footboard and shouted back, "Alright, come on!" He waved his hat at the oxen and encouraged them to hurry. The oxen, sensing the excitement, began to run. The sides of the road were littered with rocks so the coach could not pass. As they approached Glover's Lane which led west to the lake, James shouted, "Gee, Buck!" and the oxen immediately turned right onto the lane as though James was guiding them with a harness. Celia remembered this event as being quite a thrill. The ladies in the coach screamed for the driver to stop, but when the wagon quickly turned out of its way, the passengers cheered for James and his little family.

News and mail from the east and Europe arrived several times a year via stage coach. Cecelia remembered one occasion where sacrament meeting was interrupted by a young boy who entered the chapel, removed his hat, and then walked to the stand and spoke to the bishop. Bishop Hess arose to tell the congregation that the mail coach had arrived. He then dismissed the meeting so all could get their mail. Celia remembers following her mother and the rest of the members to the post office, where the postmaster stood on the porch with an enormous bag. As he pulled out letters, he called out the addressee. Mail from Europe was at least six months old, but Celia remembered, "How gladly it was received." She also remembers that many envelopes had black edges, indicating it contained news of a death.

Catherine and James both corresponded with their relatives in Wales and Somerset County and were diligent in obtaining genealogy information about their families. In 1870 James and Catherine took thirteen-year-old Alice to the Endowment House.³ There they performed proxy baptisms for deceased ancestors and other relatives. James was baptized in behalf of his great-grandfather John Millard, for both of his grandfathers, and then for his father and two brothers. Alice was baptized for James' mother Martha, who had died four years earlier, and for both of her

father's grandmothers. She was also baptized for James' sister and aunt. Catherine was baptized for her mother, Alice Howells, both of her grandmothers, and several cousins and aunts.

Endowments for the deceased were not performed in the Endowment House, so the saints eagerly anticipated the completion of the Salt Lake Temple, which was still decades away. In 1871 President Young announced that ground had been broken for the St. George Temple, which was expected to be completed within five or six years. However, St. George was over three hundred miles away.



Frederick Piercy sketched this portrait of President Brigham Young in 1855. Cecelia described the prophet as having a very mild disposition.

President Young was revered as a prophet by the early pioneers. Celia wrote, "My children have asked me if I remember President Brigham. I do remember him better than I remember my mother, for I was older when he died. . . I was 15 years old when Brigham Young died. I heard him preach and make prophecies. Everyone called President Young, Brother Brigham in those days, and the children in their prayers were taught to ask the Lord to bless Brother Brigham and keep him out of the hands of wicked men. He came often to Farmington, and when the people knew when he was expected, all the young boys would go out on the roads to pick the loose rocks out of the road and paths. He had a carriage, as very few people did at that time, but it was a long, hard ride from Salt Lake to Farmington. He had a very mild disposition and always gave such good council and advice. The people had so much confidence in him that they went to him for advice for any and all undertakings. If they were undecided where to erect any public building they would ask him and he would visit the towns and could always point out the spot, and that place it would be and every one could see in no time that it was the very best location. It was the same with laying out the towns, making new roads, selecting locations for cemeteries, etc.

"I heard him talk at a meeting in Farmington. He was tired, as he had just driven from Salt Lake, and at that time it took several hours with a good team. There was lots of desert land between Salt Lake and Farmington, and very poor roads. After you left [Salt Lake City] there were only one or two houses east of the road south of hot springs. The springs were then east of the wagon road, and most every one would get out there to look at the water boil from under the great boulders. There were no more houses until you were right in what is now the center of Bountiful [seven miles south of Farmington]. At the meeting I mentioned he said, 'The time will come when the country will be settled and people will be living in nice homes, and the land will be cultivated with trees and flowers and gardens and cultivated farms, until you won't be able to tell where one town ends and another begins, all the way from Salt Lake to Ogden.' Everyone could hardly realize it then, as there was a sandy desert between Farmington and Kaysville [five miles north of Farmington], and a sandy hill they could hardly get over with a team. Then the other side of Kaysville was the Big Sand Ridge, as it was called. The sand was so deep it took a whole day's drive to go from Kaysville to Riverdale [twelve miles apart] with a load. As late as 1883, after I was married, my husband and I drove over that road and it took us from early morning until after

dark to drive from Farmington to Riverdale. The sand was over the horses' fetlocks and half way to the hub of the wagon. Every one would have to walk, and the horses would have to rest and get their breath every few rods. The sand would drift like snow and there were no roads. There were a few dry farms east of the wagon road at that time, but very few, and not a tree for miles. I had a hard time believing what Brother Brigham had said as I was wading over my shoes in sand, but it was a true prophesy, as now you can see the most beautiful homes and trees and flowers all over that great sandy range. When the water was taken from the Weber River and put onto that great sandy land, it soon made the desert blossom as the rose."



With the completion of the train line in 1869, coal oil could be brought into Utah, replacing candles as a light source.

The railroad was completed in 1869, drastically changing many facets of Utah. Celia remembered that the trainmen allowed the Native Americans to hop on and off the empty flat cars and ride as they pleased. The train lines brought coal oil into Utah and Catherine was one of the first women to have an oil lamp, which was much brighter than the light from a candle. Celia remembers she would need to shield her eyes from the brightness when she came in from outside at night.



The Utah Central Line opened between Salt Lake City and Ogden in 1870, with a stop in Farmington, greatly facilitating commerce and personal travel. The telegraph, seen on right, was completed throughout Utah a few years earlier.

President Young encouraged north and south lines throughout Utah. Local communities donated land and money to assist the railroad companies. In 1870 the Utah Central Line shortened the time to travel between Farmington and Salt Lake to just one hour. Within a few years train lines ran north to Idaho and south to Provo, facilitating travel, commerce and church work.

As they passed the temple grounds, Catherine paused for a moment, and then looked back toward her children and said, "We will walk in here."

On one occasion Celia and her siblings accompanied her mother on the train to Salt Lake City. They left the depot and walked east on South Temple Street next to the walls around Temple Square.

Celia wrote, "I have always felt so thankful she had that desire. We walked through a winding path among the big slabs of granite rock all cut square, and about 12 to 18 inches thick and 3 feet wide and about 3 yards long that had been hauled there by ox teams for the building of the temple. There was a sheltering roof of some kind inside and joining on the high walls around the temple grounds for shade and protection from storm. There were a lot of men with all kinds of tools chipping and cutting the big slabs of granite and getting it ready for the walls of the temple. We

walked through all this and over to the foundation of the temple which was only about 12 or 15 inches high. We walked across the foundation wall which was 16 feet across. The basement had not been dug completely out of the dirt that was filled in and the walls covered up before the people left their homes and moved south in 1858. We stood there on that foundation, my mother said, ‘Oh, what a change there will be in this whole world by the time this is completed.’ I have wondered since how much of a vision, if you could call it that, she could see as she looked ahead through the vista of years and knew more than she said.”

Endnotes for Chapter 7:

1.Cecelia Millard Gover gave the details of this school and black measles in her biography. In 1896 black measles was identified to be a tick-bourne disease which was often fatal until the use of antibiotics. The 1870 census and Family Tree provided the information on the family of James T. Smith.

2.Cecelia passed these feelings on to her children. I can remember my grandmother Mary Elizabeth Grover Innes, Cecelia’s daughter, telling me of her affection and respect for the Washakie Indians.

3.I was thrilled to find these ordinances. At the time of these baptisms, James, Catherine and Alice stated their relationship to the deceased, providing invaluable genealogical information. It took some work to find the remaining ordinances “floating in the ether,” so to speak of [what was at the time] New Family Search, but with this information, combined with research of parish records, I was able to pull many families together whose temple work had already been completed but whose relationships would otherwise be unknown to us today.