

History Question of the Month

Five of the original Homestead Patent holders in our City were women. Who were they and what circumstances led to them being eligible to receive patents?

Answer

Jane Panter was the wife of William James Panter. They immigrated from England. They had 11 children, 3 of which lived to adulthood. William also had a polygamous wife Emma Bennett who he married in 1864. They had 4 children. William applied for a 160 acre "Homestead Grant" in 1869. He died in 1872. His second wife then moved to Gentile Valley where most of her family was living. Jane, his first wife stayed on the homestead and applied for patent in 1874 as the heir to William's estate.

Eliza Boggess Van Valkenburg was the third wife of Peter Van Valkenburg. He was murdered in 1874. She was left to raise their 5 children. She received a patent for 120 acres of land where they had been living by paying \$1.25 an acre, under the Land Act of 1820, on May 6, 1879.

Elizabeth Livingston, immigrated from Scotland in 1863. She married Archibald Livingston, on November 25, 1865. He immigrated from Scotland in 1855. He filed for a 160 acre homestead, which, included the property where the "Old Mill" now stands. In May of 1878, while in Castle Valley, he came down with pneumonia. Knowing it was very serious, rode on horseback to the Salt Lake Valley to be with his family. He died on May 30, 1878. Elizabeth, as his heir was able to file for patent on the property. The patent was granted April 15, 1880.

Janette Ritter, widow of William Ritter, who was killed in an avalanche in Big Cottonwood Canyon on January 16, 1875. William had come to Utah in 1847, part of the 1st group of "Mississippi Saints. After his death, Janette continued to run the 160 acre homestead with the help of her sons. On February 10, 1881, she received a patent for the homestead as William's heir.

Harriett Francis Hatch Brown and her husband William D. Brown, came to Utah in 1860. They lived in Salt Lake City for 2 years before moving to Parleys Canyon. After about one year, William left, leaving Harriett with 7 children to care for. She moved her family to Holladay, then Provo, then, Payson, and Bingham Canyon. She finally settled in Butler about 1879, where she homesteaded 160 acres of land, 80 acres of the land was in "Poverty Flats". Harriett died in June of 1880 and was buried in the Union Pioneer Cemetery. A patent was granted to the "Heirs of Harriet Brown, deceased" on December 30, 1884.

Published March 2020 Gayle Conger

Published August 2020