

A Mother's Dream

The Life Story of Alice Hames Godber

By Mabel Brown Blacker

November 1993



Herbert Brown
& Mabel Alice Godber
Wedding Photo
24 Dec 1900



Herbert Brown

James and Alice Hames Godber were living in a typical two-story house in South Normanton, Derbyshire England. He had been a coal miner all his life and he and Alice had a small shop in the downstairs part of their home, which she operated, selling basic groceries and some dry goods. Such shops are still prevalent in England.

It was August 1880 and they were anxiously waiting for the birth of their eighth baby. Their great concern was that they would be blessed to keep this one. Six of their other children's lives had been short; from only a few days to two years. Their eight-year-old son, Arthur, was still with them. They feared the sorrow of parting with another child.

The baby was born August 11, 1880. She was a beautiful baby girl with dark hair who won their hearts. She was all they could have asked. She was given the name of Mabel Alice. They had no way of knowing as they looked lovingly at her that this child would be blessed to live to adulthood. They would never in this life realize how special she was and how she had been prepared and sent to earth to perform an important mission.

James and Alice could never realize then that they also had an important part to play in the fulfilling of their daughter's mission. Grandmother only knew that she had such an overwhelming desire to leave their home and go to America, own land, and build a home there. This desire appears to have been almost an obsession with her. Grandfather seemed to feel the same urge.

The desire was so strong that plans were made to make their dream come true. Grandfather would leave England to find and prepare a home for his family in America. Grandmother would stay in England, care for their two children, and continue to operate her shop, which would provide for the family. Her widowed mother would help her.

No dates as to Grandfather's leaving England are available. The 1881 census of South Normanton, which was taken April 4, states he was still with the family, which were Alice, Arthur now nine years old, Mabel (our mother) seven months old, and his mother-in-law, Mary Hames.

It was a sad day when he left, but the little family looked forward with hope to the day they would be together in their American home. Looking back now I wonder if any of us could have had such hopes and dreams. We know that great sorrows were ahead for our loved ones. They didn't. They had faith in their dreams.

All seemed well until the late autumn of 1881. Nine year old Arthur became ill and died 19 December 1881. Two days later Grandfather's mother, Sarah Godber, died. It was a sad Christmas for the family. January 1882 came bringing renewed faith, hope, and comfort in the future. They could still go to America and build their home, but great sorrow was still ahead.

Sometime in February, Alice became ill with typhoid fever. Her illness became severe, causing problems and complications until she began to realize she would die. I wonder now, as the family wondered then, if she had not suffered enough through the years.

Naturally, her great concern was the baby's welfare. Would little Mabel Alice die as her brothers and sisters had? Even if the baby lived, she was too young to remember her mother. Another of grandmother's fears was that her life had been short and there was so much she wanted to do. She'd be forgotten and it would be as she had never lived, loved, hoped, and dreamed of better things. "Please, please remember me!" she whispered to her tiny toddler.

She was not forgotten. Passing of time took Mother's knowledge or remembrance of her mother, but not her love and longing. Who can say Grandmother behind the veil didn't watch over her? A mother's love is strong!

Many times Mother said she was always asking her father to tell her about her mother; a bond which drew her closer to her father. Even the name of Alice, which Mother carried through the years and gave her first daughter, was the name of her mother. During the years we'd talk with mother wondering what our grandmother was like and why she had to die so young. She seems to have always been in the background of our lives ... a living presence.

What comforts the dying? Does illness and approaching death ever give peace and comfort when all else seems gone? Did sweet memories of her past and her faith come to her as she relived her life?

Once again she was a little girl in her Keyworth, Nottinghamshire home where she had been born and lived with her loving family. Those were happy days as they lived and worked to provide for each other.

There in that land of legendary Robin Hood and his Merry Men, her ancestors had lived out their lives in the centuries past. They had been the agricultural workers, the butchers, the blacksmiths, the shepherds, the domestic workers, even a few wealthy landowners, and the soldiers of their great land—just ordinary people.

Alice recalled the hours she had worked with her family making lace, hose, and gloves on wooden frames to be sold to provide for the family. They were known as frame work knitters and worked in the home. Her mother and older sisters had taught her to sew for they were dressmakers. Her school life had taught the skills she used in her shop, and as a servant in a wealthy home when only fourteen years old, she had learned to keep house.

Grandmother's father, William Hames, was a bricklayer and they had moved from time to time to provide employment for him. One of my prize possessions is Grandmother's little black Bible, which is now in two pieces. In it she wrote her name, Alice Hames, which is almost faded away. They were in Ashby-de-za Zouch, Leicestershire then. On the front page she wrote that one must love Jesus more than father or mother, son or daughter. Were these passages a guide to her life?

Leaving Leicestershire, the family moved north to Ripley in Derbyshire. Alice recalled again the thrill and joy when James Godber came into her life and love. She felt again the happiness in her heart as, hand in hand; they walked into the Baptist Church in Ripley and were married. The joy of their lives united as they welcomed their babies and the deep sorrow of parting with each of them made up a major portion of their short life together.

She viewed her coming death as if all of her hopes and dreams of an American home with her family would be as if she had never lived. Grandmother Alice died March 25, 1882 at the young age of thirty-five years and four days. She left her most prized possession, her baby daughter who became our Mother, not yet two years old.

It would have taken a vision then to have been able to look down the years to see how the mission Mother had been assigned would be fulfilled. A vision of the past would be appreciated if we could look back at events that can only be surmised now.

Grandmother Alice had been ill for six weeks before her death. No doubt her mother, Mary Hames, who was a widow took care of the baby with the help of Grandmother Alice's sister, Sarah Turton. These women were described as very lovely women. Living with her Aunt, Uncle, and their only child, Alice, a month older than her was a choice learning experience. The girls were treated kindly and taught according to the teachings of whichever Protestant church they belonged. The two little girls went to school together as early as four years of age. A simple childhood memory was that they had to pass a big dog on the way, and they were afraid of him.

Here in this loving environment, Mother learned to love to read, a blessing, which remained with her for the remainder of her life. She liked reading the daily newspaper and the Bible. Her Grandmother and Aunt Sarah were dressmakers, so the girls were nicely dressed as they went to school. Mother spoke of nice dresses and a hat with a feather. She gave up a lovely, refined environment when she came to America.

The English influence lasted all Mother's life, which made her unique in many ways. She liked privacy and respected it in others. She didn't gossip or use bad language and had a strong sense of right

and wrong.

Yes, the tiny little Alice was secure and taken into the Turton family with love. An old letter written June 1914 to Mother from her Uncle George Turton, seems to prove this:

“Your Aunt Sarah, my dear wife, has been dead over twenty eight years. She was ill for over three years. Your cousin, Alice, my only daughter, has been dead for over ten years. She was ill for five years and three years in bed. Alice often talked of you and wished she could see you. She was a month older than it you.”

I recall Mother speaking of an experience she had which was so real she never forgot it. Mother said she was alone one day when she was very much aware of someone close by. Although she saw no one nor heard anyone, she felt someone’s presence. The influence lasted for some very intense time and then left, but Mother never forgot the incident. Reading the letter from her uncle, she felt the little girl she had known and loved years before had visited her.

Being blessed with a lot of imagination, little knowledge, and no revelation, little will be written of Grandfather Godber’s return to England and the difficult problems he faced. He had left a happy home, a wife, son and daughter in search of a better home. Returning to England, he discovered all that remained of his life was a little girl who had become adjusted to another family and had no memory of this stranger who had come into her life calling himself her father.

He was alone. His parents both dead. He wanted a home and to be able to provide for his daughter. Remarriage seemed the solution. He found a woman who appealed to him and they were married. Written records of the event haven’t survived the years. The degree of happiness in this new marriage, the length of it, or the reasons it failed are unknown and not important. Mother seemed to dislike her new stepmother; perhaps for the way she treated Grandfather, who Mother dearly loved. At any means, the new marriage didn’t last and now Grandfather and his daughter must start once more anew.

Grandfather finally decided to leave England. Was he following the dreams, which he and his beloved young bride, Alice, had made so many sacrifices for in order to own land and a home in America? Or was there a guiding influence that was directing him of which he was unaware? Unknown to him, did he have to leave England to help his daughter fulfill her mission?

They gathered their loved possessions into at least two trunks, (We always had two in Dad and Mother’s home) said a sorrowful ‘goodbye’ to family and dear friends and left their beloved shores of home. Grandfather only returned in dreams of the night and in the memories he cherished in his heart. He loved England!

These trunks once held valuable treasures of the past. They were filled with beautiful dishes and items that told of a happy home. With time, handling, passing around, and sorting through, many records and personal valuables from these trunks were lost. Some chronicles and old letters survived. They have become sacred. One old letter tells of a picture of Grandpa and Grandma Godber together. The loss of this is a tragedy. Grandfather’s portrait was always in Dad and Mother’s home and today graces ours. His quiet, unassuming dignity portrays the hope and courage with which he faced life. Other treasures were Grandfather’s big black Bible, Grandmother’s small black one, and her account book of her little shop in England.

Grandfather's Bible was Mother's treasure keeper. In it she kept all-important papers, flowers she had kept from weddings, funerals, and events of her life. They were lovingly pressed between the pages.

Grandmother's shop account book started about 1875, when they first opened their shop and seemed to end after 1882 when she became ill. Her records reveal she was too liberal and trusting and had to send some accounts for collection to court. Some, Grandfather couldn't collect years later in America. It's easy to see her sitting at her desk at home in the dim candlelight, pouring over her accounts and concerned about how she could provide for her family.

Several of these accounts in her shop book are interesting. They help see our ancestors as real people. One account belonged to her father, William Hames, in which he purchased bacon, sugar, tea, coffee, butter, lard, sago, potatoes, eggs, cheese, dips (candies), flour, sope, barum (yeast), fruit, green stuff, and tobaco. Another account is her mother, Mary Hames. Her's included cashmere, sateen, one collar, cotton (spool of thread), gimp, flannel, bibs, bonnet, diper, wool, buttons, toweling, a feather, lining, and like things. Not all articles were purchased on the same date, and some entries were left undated.

Grandmother's looks! That's a description waiting for each of us as we meet in the great beyond, which we surely will. Grandfather's descriptions of her to Mother were vague and not helpful. He said, "she had light brown hair, grayish blue eyes, not too tall, just a typical English girl." Had he lived to see his four granddaughters, he might have said, "all in one way or another." The next generation down, with his great-granddaughters, the resemblance would still be strong. Alice Hames Godber's physical presence is still felt.

Grandfather Godber was a large man, about six feet tall, broad shoulders and long arms, black hair and dark brown eyes. An old letter a relative wondered how different he was and where he got his looks. He was a loving, kindly looking man.

Mother was like her father in physical features. She was tall, straight, and until later in life, very thin. Her eyes were grayish blue, and she took care of her long, thick, black hair, which was her pride, never cutting it. Even though Mother resembled her father physically, because of her heritage and environment in her early formative years, she emotionally took after her mother, grandmother, and Aunt Sarah. A mother's impact in early years is forever forged in a child's emotional memory.

Grandfather's leaving England was a great sacrifice as life was never as easy nor as profitable as what was left behind. Grandfather, his brother, Isaac, and little Mabel Alice set off on this journey. No definite date of their leaving, nor even the name of the ship is known, but it must have been 1884 or 1885 and Mother was then five or six years old.

The Third Judicial Court in Evanston, Wyoming helps establish a date. Grandfather filed his intentions of being an American citizen on November 2, 1886. He could possibly have been in America a year by that time.

Alone once more with a young daughter, Grandfather set out to grasp all this new country offered ... the Dream would be fulfilled. Grandfather was a coalminer and soon found employment in the newly opening coalmines. It seems they had lived in Denver, Rock Springs, and finally settled in Almy.

Almy was a very cosmopolitan and growing community. Immigrants had come from many places in search of a better life, especially from Great Britain. Among them were converts of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The Godbers were Protestants, but found many friends from England in this new area. Some were friends they had known previously.

The United States Government was offering 160 acres of land free to any who would file and work to improve the land for five years. Many of their English friends had already begun building homes. Grandfather took advantage of the offer for he felt this was an answer to his and grandmother Alice's dream of own-ing land. No date of his filing is known, but I have a small piece of paper dated June 4, 1892 which states that James Godber had paid his water assignment of \$16 for the year. Mother was then about twelve years old and already they were on their own land. Wyoming had been their home for six years.

Wyoming was not England with its stately churches and cathedrals, old castles, homes, shops, stores, towns, and people. Life was far different than Grand-mother Alice's dream and life for Mother was so different than if she had stayed in England. What would our life be like today had they not dreamed and ventured beyond their comfortable borders? But, carried in her subliminal memory, Mother kept much of what she had been taught.

Grandfather and Mother's home was a log cabin built by Grandfather who was no carpenter and the home supplied their bare needs, but to them it became a place they loved. Friends and neighbors lived under the same poverty conditions. Stores which provided the necessities of life were miles away over trails that yet had to be made into roads. The beauties of life and many of their needs were provided by Mother Nature. The carefully cultivated roses and gardens of England were sub-stituted by wild flowers blooming among the rocks and sagebrush. Early spring would bring the dainty little flowers followed by the hardier summer and autumn foliage such as the tall, stately sago lily, the brilliant Indian Paint Brush, and others that bloomed among the rocks and sagebrush. In this stark new land, from Grandmother's English influence, came Mother's love for flowers, which she used to create beauty and serenity. She tried to always keep geranium pots in her windows. She loved roses but never had many until later in her life. Fuchsia and shamrock bloomed colorfully throughout her home. These lasting segments of Grandmother Godber's training and early example stayed with her for life and were passed on to future generations.

Each day the sun came up bringing work to be done. At night the moon and stars brought peace and comfort to them. In time, they learned to love their new home; a love which they passed on to her children. In memory I still wander every inch of that desolate beautiful land where I lived the part of my early formative years. Recovering those memories, I have often gained strength to carry me through hard times in my life.

The summer days ended and it was time to go back to Almy, rent a company house, and prepare for the winter. Grandfather would go back into the mine to earn enough money to live on their land another year.

The years passed in a regular cycle. Every spring they returned to their land to improve it. There was the house to enhance, a barn to build for the horses, and ditches to dig to bring water to the dry, thirsty land. They dug a well to provide cool water for themselves and the horses. They also took their place in improving the community as they made friends with their neighbors.

The Godbers were different when it came to religion. All of their neighbors were Latter-Day Saints in some degree or another. Mother attended some meetings and enjoyed what social life there was, but they never officially joined the church. Mother asked her father why they didn't. He said, "Happen I might some day. But you know, Mabel, the heavens are sealed like brass and there's no revelation anymore."

The years passed and Mother, like all young girls, was faced by the question of who she would marry. The coalmines in Almy were closing because of mine explosions, causing our family to seek work in Glencoe and surrounding mines. In- one of these places, Mother met a fine young man who belonged to a prominent family. Grandfather thought that Mother should marry this man. Why she didn't she never said. She did say, "Our lives would have been so different had I gone that way."

Like all young people, Mother associated with the youth of Almy and Hilliard and as Mormons were predominate, she knew more of them than non-Mormons. Somewhere and somehow she finally met our Father, Herbert Brown. I never asked and she never told the way of their meeting.

Dad and Mother were married December 24, 1900 at Spring Valley, a small mining town near Evanston where the Godbers, Dad and his brother, Frank, had gone to work in the mine. They were married by the Presiding Elder of the Latter-Day Saint Branch of Spring Valley, a branch of the Evanston Ward.

While living in Spring Valley, Mother and Dad had their first two children born. Alice was first, and then Violet came to join the family. Grandpa had two little girls to cheer his lonely years and remind him of the Dream he shared with his beloved Alice. Time was also spent in Hilliard and Almy where Dad had a homestead and his mother also had one.

During the fall of 1905 the family went to Glenco, a mining town near Kemmerer. Grandpa lived with Dad and Mother and all went well until Grandfather became ill and in January pneumonia developed. Twice before he had been ill and was warned another attack would be serious for him. In spite of the doctor's care, Grandfather was unable to get well. The many years in the coalmines had damaged his lungs and the many heartbreaks in life seemed more than he could manage. On the morning of January 30, 1906, the doctor visited Grandpa who seemed much improved, but as the day passed, Mother could see her father was leaving her. He became delirious and in his mind, he was once more back in England with loved ones.

Before night, Grandpa experienced one of the great blessings of his life. He left his sick bed and tired body and joined his beloved Alice, his children, and father and mother in the great beyond. All the many years of waiting, loneliness and longing were over. Grandfather had faithfully filled his life's mission. He had brought not only his daughter, but his unborn grandchildren to America. He could report to Grandmother Alice that he had kept their Dream alive.

In Glencoe, Wyoming there was sadness. Mother's dearly loved father was gone. Her last physical link with the past was over. Her great future mission was ahead of her.

It was Mother and Dad's sad mission to accompany Grandfather's body by train for burial. His funeral was held in the red brick L.D.S. church in Evanston. Mother claimed he was buried beside his brother, Isaac, who had come to America with him and who had been killed in the Denver coal mines years before.

Spring came and Dad and Mother returned to the ranch her father had left her. Although Alice was only five years old, she said she would never forget Mother's tears as she returned to the empty house so full of memories she and her father had as they had lived in for so many years. He had walked with her thus far, but her mission was to go on to fulfill the Dream.

A neighbor's concern for Mother's fear of the Indians who roamed the country during the summer months was the reason for giving her a copy of the Book of Mormon. He promised her that if she'd read it she wouldn't be afraid of them any longer. Mother often mentioned this, but just when he gave her the Book, I don't recall, Mother loved to read and in her log cabin home by the light of a kerosene lamp, she read and knew the Book was true.

The summer of 1906 was spent on the ranch, but Dad and Mother returned in the fall to find work in Almy. While there, Mother knew she must be baptized. She was twenty-six years old and had been a member of the Brown family for six years. All of this while she and her father had been faithful to the Protestant churches. She felt now it was time to join the Mormon Church.

November 11, 1906 is an important date. Ice was broken in the Bear River near Grandpa and Grandma Brown's home and Mother took another step in the great mission she had been sent to earth to do.

The years passed. Mabel, Dorothy, James, and Melvin joined the family circle in their own time. The Brown family took an active place in schools, church, and community life.

During the passing years Mother studied the gospel and the principle of salvation for the dead appealed strongly to her. Perhaps a silent whispering from Grandmother Godber prompted this interest. All of her English loved ones were dead and, if she needed baptism, so did they. Mother's knowledge of needed information was limited and so were the available sources. Dad assisted with money. Alice, Violet, and Dorothy wrote letters and yet efforts didn't seem to accomplish much. During the years, the temple work had been done for those loved ones on whom Mother could find the proper data.

Dad's health was never the best but he consistently provided us with a good home. He had bad times but always seemed to get better and we hoped that all would be well. In the summer and fall of 1928 we knew he was seriously ill. He went to Lava Hot Springs, Idaho hoping that the heated water there would help. Mother was with him that November 22, 1928. He proposed to her once again. "If I live, will you go and be sealed as my eternal wife?" Mother accepted once again, but Dad's life was over. He died that evening.

Prior to my leaving for a mission and true to mother's promise to Dad, she took Violet, Jim, Melvin and me to be sealed in the Salt Lake Temple. Alice and Dorothy went later. Then it seemed a sacred and beautiful experience as we knelt around the altar as a family. The sad thing: Dad wasn't there! Someone

else acted as proxy for him. But who can take the place of a loving father. He was absent in body but he was there in our thoughts. Important things can be neglected until it's too late; our hope and faith looked into the future when Dad would be with us once more.

Other important ordinances were done also. Dad hadn't been sealed to his parents. Violet was proxy for Grandma Brown as Dad was sealed to his parents. Mother asked if I'd take the place of her mother so she could be sealed to her dear parents she had loved for so long. Along with the other ordinances, this was special to me. During the passing years, this has become a treasured memory in my life. Mother wished she and Dad hadn't waited so long. But she was glad she finally had all her family sealed together. It was through this experience that I realized the importance of temple work, and the importance of the family unit.

Mother lived for nineteen years after Dad left her. She often wondered why she should always be alone. First her mother, then her father, and then her husband had died leaving her behind. They were lonely years, but Mother was not a complainer. She often said her father counseled, "Mabel, just don't murmur." Her children helped her with the big decisions, but there was the ranch with its daily problems of haying, feeding, buying, and selling. She had two sons to educate, some girls to marry, and grandchildren to welcome. She loved them all. She told me several times she had such good children. She loved the ranch, and found comfort in the seasons. She loved the smell of fresh cut hay and also the horses and cattle.

Mother loved genealogical research and Temple Work. She so wanted to know more of her parents, especially her mother and her people. Research and records weren't as available then as now. Several times when all efforts to find her ancestors failed she'd say, "I guess I'll have to go find them on the other side."

Could be Mother did just that! Perhaps in some way she directed the researchers we'd hired in England to search for records, not in Derbyshire where they had been unable to find the name of Grandmother, but in Nottinghamshire. Several months after Mother's death, I held in my hands a copy of her birth certificate and the needed information of Alice Hames and her parents, opening up new fields of finding our ancestors for generation on many lines, always in the county of Nottingham. There's life behind the veil!

One of Mother's great sorrows was the early death of her daughter, Violet. She wondered why she had been called to part with her. Mothers love each child the same, but each child has a special place in a mother's heart, which no one else fills. Violet died April 5, 1945. There must have been some comfort from the fact that Violet was met by Grandfather, Grandmother, and Dad.

World War II troubled Mother as she had Jim and Melvin who could be called. Jim was married and Mother thought of Melvin as her baby and she needed him. "Another sacrifice," she said. Knowing he must go to enlist, I slept with her all night to comfort her and she did much of the talking. She told me how good the country had been to her and her father and family. "Now", she said, "the debt must be paid." We went to town the next day and Mother bought herself three pairs of shoes! She learned to knit and made many scarves for the soldiers. She often walked to watch the troop trains pass to Evanston and wave the enlisted young men goodbye.

The morning of January 5, 1948 dawned as usual. A light snow had fallen during the night, but the winter morning was beautiful. Mother locked the door and left. Her footprints were imprinted on the covered walk, but none would show that she returned. Her earthly life was fast coming to an end. Mother had planned her day. She would pay some bills and have her utilities shut off for a few months, take the afternoon train to Ogden, and then later go to Ontario, Oregon. Before leaving the house she'd packed her cases, not closing them until she returned.

Imagine the excitement that took place in that great spirit world. Her loved ones were waiting for her. Especially her Mother who, years before in tears and sorrow had said, "Please, please remember me."

In the City Hall, Mother suffered a massive heart attack and in a few brief moments joined her loved ones in the great beyond. All her fears, doubts, and longings were over.

Years previously, a Patriarchal. Blessing had promised her:

"Inasmuch as thou hast been faithful in keeping that first and great commandment to multiply and replenish the earth, your seed shall grow and increase and become numerous and you shall look upon them with joy and pleasure for the opportunity that has been yours of bringing noble men and women into this life."

Today Mother's descendants number several hundred. During these years the family have watched with concern, love, and pride the growth of the family. They I, have grown, not only in number, but into good men and women as they have struggled with their problems. They have grown into people of strength and courage as they served their community, family, church, and country.

As Mother died, another portion of her blessing she had received years before was fulfilled:

"And when you have finished and lived your life to your satisfaction, it will be your privilege to meet and enjoy the companionship and society of those loved ones who had gone before."

How wonderful that reunion must have been. Once again Grandmother Alice Hames Godber was blessed to hold and embrace her little girl, her daughter who was so important in fulfilling her and her husband's dreams of a better life. Sooner or later we all will share this event, as each of us will experience the joy of meeting with loved ones. For the first time in memory, the Godber Family was united. Finally, as Alice Hames Godber encircled her loved daughter in her arms once more, she knew her life's dream was accomplished.

EPILOGUE

Twenty-eight years later:

One late autumn day of 1976, along desired experience was realized. We were riding in a comfortable car from Bolton to South Normanton, Derby to visit Mother's birthplace and Grandma Godber's grave.

Subsequently, I have often envisioned King Arthur and his Knights riding their horses in search of the Holy Grail. I was in search of my roots.

For years I had searched maps of places where my ancestors had lived. By the magic of microfilm I had searched for their names written so long ago. They were now faded and, in many cases indecipherable. I cherished the name of every ancestor I found.

I imagined every place on the map where my people lived. But that day I was there and so were the places! Places I had identified in my mind: Alfreton, Somercoates, Swanswick, Ripley, Codnor Park, Golden Valley, South Normanton, and Pentrich. Road signs were pointing in all directions to other locations nearby: Greasley, Selston, Nottingham, and Keyworth. So many places I would have loved to visit. Time permitted only the most important ones.

Driving down the main street of Ripley, we passed the large imposing Church of England. Just a few yards on the opposite side of the road was a small church. A short way from the street marked "Baptist Church."

Years before I obtained a copy of the marriage record of James Godber and Alice Hames. What a thrill! They had walked hand in hand one hundred eight years previously to be married and now I stood in the same place. I was encompassed with the spirit of their happiness that day of March 3, 1868. We were unable to enter the building, but to simply be there was a sacred experience.

A few miles from Ripley was Pentrich. It is an ancient place with records dated back to 1653. History states the "grand old church" was already in existence in 1175. Because most smaller villages had no church, many people living around went there for the blessings and ordinations of the Church, including Ripley.

The church stands on a small incline reached only by climbing ancient stone steps. Envisioning those stone steps, I think of the joys and sorrows the many centuries of people experienced as they climbed for christenings, weddings, funerals and the comforts of the Church.

One interesting discovery was that our feet were larger than the ones who had made the steps long before. At the top of the stairs was the portal to the old church. It was now locked. Looking at the little old locked door, we could see we were taller than its builders. The new addition to the church was beautiful, but the cemetery was neglected. Thousands were buried around the church waiting the resurrection. What stories this old place could tell.

South Normanton, Mother's birthplace, was beautiful and peaceful that day. Her birth certificate stated she was born in the newer part of the town. The streets were wider, cleaner, and had that comfortable

English look. Here Mother had been born and had laughed, played, and cried in her childhood. I loved the place.

Entering South Normanton's church, we viewed the baptismal font. Here Mother had been sprinkled as she was baptized into the church. That had been ninety-five or ninety-six year's prior. It was a typical English church. Some great and important people had been buried under the floor and memorials for others were on the walls. The pulpit was raised several steps above the floor so all could see and hear the minister. Grandmother had been buried from this building.

A young man offered to guide us and asked if we'd like to climb the rock steps to see how the bell rang. Climbing was too much for me to reach the top, so I sat down and could almost hear the toll of the bell pealing in sorrow the day Grand-mother was buried.

Leaving the church we entered the churchyard hoping to find Grandmother's grave. I was sadly disappointed. There were no tombstones. Some older men told us all the tombstones had been removed. The area was peaceful, clean, and quiet. Trees lined the border, among them a horsechestnut tree with its rich-colored nuts covering the ground. It was calm there, but thinking back, that small sacred piece of ground had heard much sorrow and tears as loved ones had been laid away. Grandmother's loved ones had felt the sorrow of parting with her was all about. I pondered if our own Mother had wondered what it felt the comfort of knowing that Grandmother Alice's body was waiting for the next great event—her resurrection. This gave me peace.

We visited Alfreton, Golden Valley, and Codnor Park, but no ancestor's graves could be located. Darkness was closing in and it was time to reluctantly return to Bolton. I'd found a feeling of belonging with those who had lived here and a sense of pride that my ancestors had lived and made their contributions to the world.

Two days later we were home in Idaho. Shortly after returning home we visited our loved ones in Evanston and "reported" our experiences to Dad and Mother. Kneeling beside their graves, a flood of love and gratitude overwhelmed me. These two dear ones had not only given me the great blessing of life, but had guided me along the way with love, patience, understanding, and taught me the best they knew.

What beautiful memories of that life with them in that humble log home. Thanks for all the love and sacrifices and the joys you gave so willingly to us all. Thanks for being Father and Mother.

Who can tell the importance of one single individual, Grandmother Alice Hames Godber's mortal influence was short, but her character, integrity, love, discipline, and genetic traits continue to flow strong and dominant in us, her posterity. She lives on! This poem verbalizes the impact, which a long ago loved one has on us:

TO AN ANCESTOR

I never met you, but I think I know
so much about you, that I almost see
your form beside me as I onward go.

At times it seems I hear you speak to me.

I am the one to whom you handed down
your dreams, your wondrous knowledge,
and your looks.

You gave to me the dreamer's laurel crown,
a love of singing words, and poets' books.

Sometimes I wonder if the words I write
are yours or mine, for it is hard to tell,
those words that come in lovely trailing white
or clad in black to sound a warning knell!

Dear One, my spirit knows this to be true:
You are a part of me and I of you.

Georgia Moore Eberling