

Excerpts from:

Maud Grant Alexander, *Uncle Dave Discovers Gold*
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Maud is a descendant of William Brigham Parkinson's
stepmother Mary Ann Nutman

When the miners and others of the masculine population saw that women were coming in with the ox teams and wagon trains, the chivalry and morals of the community were greatly improved. When Mrs. John T. Parkinson who had lost her husband on the trip from Omaha, Nebraska let it be known that she would wash, mend, and bake for the miners they were so pleased that they joined forces and built her a log cabin. She in turn did many things for them. Mrs. Parkinson, who ten years later was to become Mrs. David Littlefield, had at that time a son four months old, a daughter two years old and a stepson twelve years old, so it was imperative that she work hard.

Mrs. David S. Littlefield

Mary Ann Nutman was born in Great Yarmouth, England on October 15, 1836. Her father was a rope maker and had a home and business of his own. Mary Ann's mother died when Mary Ann was too small to remember much about her. There was a large family so the younger children were reared by the father and older sisters.

The boys were sent to boarding school or apprenticed to other tradesmen. The girls went to school as best they could which meant whenever they had the three pence to pay for their day's instruction. Mary Ann was a very apt pupil and learned many things by observation as well as by careful attention to study.

As the years passed the older girls married, and one sister, Elizabeth came to America and settled in St. Louis, Missouri, and Mary Ann found work as a maid in various homes. This was not always very pleasant. At last she found employment as a maid in the home of a wealthy, miserly, disagreeable old woman, the widow of a nobleman.

Working conditions in this home were very unpleasant and there was no friendliness between mistress and servants. Each day the mistress came to the kitchen before breakfast to lay out the supplies for the day. All of the kitchen cupboards were locked and the mistress carried the keys on her belt and slept

with them under her pillow at night. Every morning she measured out the number of matches to be used that day, also the number of kindling sticks to be used and woe to the servants if the fire went out and the sticks were all used up. England being a tea drinking nation, the servants were required to buy their own tea.

England at that time was also a very superstitious Nation. It was the general belief that if at Christmas time the pudding, which was of course molded in the form of a lion, should be broken, dire misfortune and disaster would follow the household all through the coming year.

Christmas was near and the mistress became quite cheerful and bought a pound of tea which she placed on the shelf saying it was to be a Christmas present for the servants when the day came.

At last the long looked for day arrived and all was gay festivity. But when the cook took the pudding from the mold the head fell off. Mary Ann was never sure that the cook wasn't careless on purpose. However she placed the head back on and put it in a covered dish then handed it to Mary Ann to take to the dining room. Mary Ann placed the dish before her mistress and turned to leave the room. She was promptly ordered back and told to uncover the dish, which she slowly and reluctantly did. The lion's head of course rolled onto the table. The old lady shrieked, wrapped her arms about her body and rocked back and forth recounting the disasters to come and invoking the wrath of God on her servants.

As punishment for the servants they were not allowed any food that day and were threatened with no food that next day. They had no transportation to go out and the shops were closed anyway. They spent

a very miserable holiday. She also decreed that they should not have the pound of tea that was promised for their holiday gift. However the butler suggested they take the tea from the top of the package, use it, dry it and put it back in the bottom. This they did and continued to do until the tea was all used up.

In the meantime the mistress had used all of her supply and sent to the kitchen for the pound that still stood on the shelf. It was Mary Ann's duty to make the tea for her mistress which she did but when she poured it into the cup it was colorless. The mistress said she had forgotten to put in the tea and told her to put in more. The second time Mary Ann poured the tea it was just as colorless as the first.

Now the mistress was really angry. She would return the tea to the grocer who had sold it to her. She hobbled down to the kitchen, her cane making a loud thump, thump on the way. She told her butler to order the carriage and horses at once, then went back up stairs. Some how in her haste she had put her keys on the table and had forgotten to pick them up. The cook saw them and at once opened the cupboard and took out a bottle of liquor. Everyone had a drink and was enjoying it when they heard the thump of the cane approaching the kitchen. They hurried to put the bottle back in the cupboard and return the keys where they found them but in their haste they spilled some of the contents of the bottle on the floor. When the mistress came into the room she saw the wet spot on the floor and asked what it was. The cook told her it was water, but the mistress being naturally distrustful got down on her hands and knees to smell of it. Well, being very crippled with rheumatism once down she was unable to get up. The unsympathetic servants declined to help her in her struggles.

After a few months of this life Mary Ann felt the