

Ephraim Samuel Frazee, 1824-1896

By Mrs. LUCIUS O. (FANNIE FRAZEE) HAMILTON

Ephraim Samuel Frazee, son of Dr. Ephraim Frazee and Susan Mountjoy Doniphan Frazee, was born at Mayslick, Kentucky, Oct. 4, 1824, and died at Orange, Indiana, June 14, 1896. The father died when Ephraim Samuel was but three days old, leaving the young wife, only twenty eight years of age, with four little sons to rear, the eldest, Joseph Samuel, then by his years of age. For several years after the father's death, the widowed mother made her home at Germantown, Kentucky. Here, in partnership with his youngest brother, Joseph Frazee, her husband had owned a general store. Joseph was appointed guardian for his four little nephews and executor of their father's estate, which, beside the interest in the store at Germantown, consisted of lands in Indiana located in Rush, Fayette and Marion Counties.

Several years after the death of Dr. Frazee, the widow and her two older sons, Joseph Samuel and Lewis Jacob, came to the farm in Rush County, Indiana, which the widow adopted as a permanent home. The older boys often returned and spent much time in Kentucky, until they became real southerners at heart. Lewis, returning there for his education, never lived for any long period in Indiana.

The two younger sons, William Doniphan and Ephraim Samuel, remained for several years after their mother came to Indiana, with their guardian, Uncle Joseph Frazee, near Germantown, Kentucky. They attended school and helped in the store.

It was a delight to me, when a young married woman, living in Brooksville, Kentucky, to visit my cousin Susan, the only daughter of Uncle Joseph Frazee. She married John Harvey Walton, and with her husband was living on the Walton farm

north of the old Frazee farm which was situated north and east of Germantown. It was pleasant to have her tell me in most tender and admirable language of the great esteem which Uncle Joseph had for my father, who, she said, was always "so dutiful, so respectful, so appreciative, and so clean of mind, and a real brother" to her.

At the age of fourteen years my father left his uncle's home to live with his mother in Indiana. He made the long trip from Germantown⁵ to his mother's home alone and on horseback. When he reached Laurel, Indiana, upon inquiry he was told the way to the home of the Widow Frazee in Rush County. Late in the evening, having gone too far on the road before turning, and realizing that he must have missed his way, he stopped at the home of a family named Grey and asked for a night's lodging. It was not convenient for the Greys to accommodate the strange young traveler. He was told that if he would go a little farther on to the home of "Deacon Austen" he could probably find lodging. Darkness had fallen but the weary boy started on once more, and reached the Austen home. Here he did not ask in vain, and when the family learned that he was the son of the "rich Widow Frazee" a friend of the Austens, he was most warmly welcomed, given a good supper, allowed to "toast" his feet by the blazing fireside and given a night's rest in a good clean bed. Incidentally he made the acquaintance of little Frances Austen, a miss of twelve years, destined eight years later to become his bride.

On their Rush County farm of 640 acres of black fertile soil, this blue-eyed, fair-skinned, tow-headed, slender lad grew to young manhood among all the vicissitudes, adventures, hardships, and pleasures of Indiana's pioneer life. At this time there were only trails and mud roads for the traveler. The land was covered with heavy forests, many of the large poplar, oak and walnut trees having trunks from ten to fifteen feet in circumference. The land was full of swamps that were dangerous to the health of the inhabitants. It was many years before the country was well drained. This improvement was still in process during my childhood days. As late as when my brother, Austen, was in his 'teens', I can remember him being ill with ague, or as many called it, "chills and fever." I can still see him wrapped in a big bed comfort, sitting in an arm chair, chilling until it seemed to me he shook the house.

My father's mother, a woman who belonged to a family, that for many generations had been accustomed to education, did not neglect the schooling of her four sons. She saw to it that they all became college-trained men. I have in my possession the diploma of my father who was graduated from Bethany College, Virginia. It is dated July 4, 1846, and signed by that noted American divine, Alexander Campbell. Another signature is that of R. Richardson, Professor of Chemistry.

My father, having been left without a father in infancy, and, having had the example of his Uncle Joseph Frazee as his guardian, was always considerate and solicitous for widows and orphans. Many estates did he settle as executor, never once charging for his services. During his active life, the Circuit Court of Rush and Fayette Counties never convened without his having some report to make or some cause to plead. Naturally fitted intellectually for the law, with a judicial mind, he was a success in court and knew more law than some who made law their profession. Twice he was honored by Rush and Decatur Counties, being sent as their joint-representative to the State legislature. He was urgently requested to accept a third term, but since he never approved of the acceptance of a third term by anyone, he declined. He had many disappointments, many heartaches, was more than once treacherously betrayed by men whom he thought friends, but he never wavered. He never lost heart and always kept his wonderful faith in the Heavenly Father, believing beyond any doubt that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and that eventually all things work together for good for those who love, serve, and trust in God.

My father was in his thirty-seventh year when the Civil War began. At this age, besides being a preacher with ten children, he was not expected to go to war. His duty was rather to care for the country-side during this great national upheaval. His brothers, all older than he, had passed the age of enlistment. The family burden in this respect fell upon the younger generation, on his nephews, the sons of his oldest brother, Joseph Samuel. Father and his next older brother, William Doniphan, were for the Union. Their two older brothers were in sympathy with the Confederacy. His mother, a southerner, was very bitter against the Government for waging war

on the South. Father's older children were girls. He had no son old enough to enter the service. The two nephews who volunteered were sons of Joseph Samuel. The eldest, John Paul, fought for the Union, while Louis, the next son, fought for the Confederacy. My cousin, John Paul, told me in later years that he and his brother met once during the war. The two armies were encamped within close range and the brothers were able to meet at a dividing fence and talk together.

When the four years of horror had passed and the wonderful news came that General Lee had surrendered, joy was unconfined through the North. Often have I heard my mother relate that when the glad tidings came the word was passed from mouth to mouth. Heralds hurried on their fastest horses to shout the news to all who were within hearing distance. Every farmer had a dinner bell, and, when the news was shouted out, each bell was set to ringing. My father stood for three hours and rang our bell, pealing out the tidings as far as the tones would carry, when joy and peace were heralded to the countryside.

Father was one of the patrons and founders of Butler College. As long as he was physically able, he attended the Board meetings. He took great pride in the College, as a school of the Christian Church, and raised a large portion of the funds to establish it. He gave liberally of his own means, expecting the new institution to become a second Bethany. For my part, I am thankful that he did not live to see an agnostic fill a chair of instruction nor to see the school pass from its original paramount purpose, that of educating young men and young women in the simple gospel of the New Testament, an object so dear to his heart. In other things he needs would have submitted to the inevitable changes of progress.

My father lived the life of a pioneer leader in Indiana, and was one of the builders of civilization in the new State. He was a born leader and many-sided in his vision of life. As our forefathers would have said, "He was a man of parts." He led his community in its educational, religious and social development. In moral courage, in civic pride, in the cultivation of farms and in the raising of live stock he was at the front.

In addition to being a preacher, teacher, politician and executor of estates, he was a successful breeder of registered cattle and of Percheron Norman and Clydesdale horses. His rep-

utation as such reached far beyond the borders of our own State. Men from all sections of Indiana and elsewhere purchased from him valuable and beautiful registered stock. He was a real benefactor to the State in this capacity. Coming to Indiana when the State was comparatively new, when it needed men of force, wisdom, and discretion, he became a responsible and most valuable citizen.

About the year 1875, he possessed his first show-herd of short-horn cattle, which was the forerunner of the show-herds extending over all the remaining years of his active life. During the last few years of his activities in this line, he owned two marvelous show-herds of short-horn cattle which he exhibited far and wide at the County and State fairs, not only in Indiana but in adjoining States. He brought home many "ribbons," but the number cannot be estimated at this late day.

He was the force and guiding influence in organizing the first Live Stock Association of America. He assisted in publishing the *Short-Horn-Herd-Book*, in which all his own and all other blooded-stock were registered. Many volumes of this *Herd-Book* accumulated, until they completely filled one of his bookcases.

The breeding of fine Percheron and Clydesdale horses was as much a hobby with him as the production of blooded cattle. The great draft horses that he owned were very like those that one sees to-day on the streets of the cities of England, France, Belgium and Switzerland—large, powerful, beautiful, gentle, just such as are portrayed in that famous picture by Rosa Bonheur, "The Horse Fair," which hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of New York City.

When a little more than twenty-two years of age, on March 9, 1847, he was married to Frances Austen who was two years his junior. To this union were born twelve children, eight of whom, four sons and four daughters, lived to maturity. Seven of the eight married and reared families.

The Reverend Ephraim Samuel Frazee was a remarkable father. His demeanor, his conversation and influence in the home were always ennobling and of the highest order. His conversation was cheerful, clean, wholesome and witty. Our home was in no sense a "common" one. Neighborhood gossip and the meddling in the affairs of others were things not tolerated, nor was immodesty or vulgarity of either word or ac-

tion. He gave his children a college education, and was always liberal and generous with them in the things necessary to their development and welfare. He desired to lead them into lives of usefulness and responsibility. His children have lived to appreciate their heritage and honor his memory.

In all his struggles and joys he had a sympathetic partner in his loyal wife. A woman of rare intellect and education, she was a help to him in his literary pursuits as much as in his every day walk of life. She was an ever present and necessary help to him as a critic of his sermons and other public addresses. She could, with a quick discernment, see the strong points and errors in his composition. He relied much on her judgment as to the proper language through which to express himself clearly and to the point. Few people knew this of our mother; she was so modest, so timid and so retiring in her disposition. Nevertheless, her mind was of a high order and her mental perception was keen. She thoroughly understood her husband's mentality, his work, and his usefulness. She was a true and helpful companion, who never failed him in sickness, nor in health.

He was the power that caused the gravel road to be built from Fayetteville [Orange] to Falmouth, a distance of seven miles, a big undertaking in the period of father's active life. He also had built the gravel road leading from Fayetteville to Rushville, intercepting the Rushville and Glenwood (then Vienna) gravel road at the old Rush County Fair-grounds. This pike was also seven miles in length. After six miles of this road had been completed, reaching within one mile of Fayetteville, and to the west boundary of our home farm, the funds were exhausted. The neighbors had donated to the extent of their means and despair almost possessed them. My father would not give up. He, with the assistance of James Davis, a neighbor and brother in our church, strained their own resources and paid for the last mile out of their own funds, dividing the expense between them, each paying the sum of \$1,000. These were large gifts for those days, especially after each had originally given liberally of both labor and money.

Years went by and the country advanced. Public sentiment resented the toll-gates on the pikes. People began to imagine that my father was financially benefited by the toll receipts,

though he seldom received sufficient funds for the annual repair for years.

A generation grew up who knew little of my father's early struggles, nor of the civic work he had accomplished, nor of the condition of the community before he became the helper and leader. It was this generation that resented the toll-gates. One seldom wins in combating public sentiment when once a wrong notion is in the minds of the people, so my father was a loser in this. It nearly broke his heart to hear his efforts and achievements for the public good spoken of as personal aggrandizement. It caused him much grief and was a bitter disappointment to him to realize that his work was not appreciated. He was grieved to see, a few years later, these roads become free to the public, especially to the teamsters who hauled to nearby sawmills heavy loads of logs. It required from four to six horses to pull these loads and deep ruts were made in the roads. Repair work was neglected, the pikes became full of mud-holes and a part of father's work seemed in vain. Were he living to-day he could see that his efforts were in time followed by greater achievements. Such are the disappointments and trials of progress. Now, though we have no toll-gates in Indiana, the people willingly pay automobile license fees and road taxes. Money for highway construction and upkeep is paid for by every purchaser of gasoline. Now, not only in Rush and Fayette Counties, but checkering our whole nation are wonderful concrete roads, and the people must pay for them. Such are the inevitable epoch making changes that have come.

My father little realized in his last years that his period was just closing, and that a new, very different, very much more advanced period was just beginning. He never saw nor heard of an automobile, but my mother, who survived him fourteen years, lived both to see and ride in a "nineteen-ten" Packard car.

My father manufactured the tile with which to drain his land. He always had the first piece in the community of any new type of farm machinery. He owned the first reaper, the first carriage, the first buggy, the first double-plow, the first harrow, and the first wheat-binder. He bought mother the first sewing machine in the community, the first washing machine and the first clothes wringer. I still remember the first

window screens made of mosquito-bar, which were a marvel to every one who saw them. We had never seen nor heard of window screens until one day a visitor in our home, President Otis A. Burgess of Butler College, told my mother about having seen them in use. He described them to her and she at once resolved to install them. No sooner said than done—the next day we had a carpenter, Mr. John George, making frames for screens. Not long after we had the real thing. This was in the summer of 1875.

From boyhood my father was deeply religious and ever took an active part in the church. When yet a young man, he gave land from his inheritance for a church lot and a cemetery for the Little Flat Rock Church in Rush County where he and his mother held their membership. In this cemetery, he and mother, both, lie buried.

In our home my father always conducted daily family worship, after the manner and example of the man who was his model in many things, Alexander Campbell. Before breakfast the family was assembled. Father led in the reading of the Scriptures, while we read alternately a verse each through the chapter. No child who could spell out the words was ever excused, and father never lost his patience with the slow efforts of the child just learning to read. After a chapter in the New Testament was read, we all knelt in front of our chairs and father offered prayer, in which he never failed to express a desire that each of his children should be led into lives of usefulness, in whatever community fate might place them. After prayer, a chapter was read in the Old Testament, then we had our breakfast. It seems fair to mention that mother would place the newly made biscuits in the oven just before worship began, and, with a well-regulated wood fire, they would be ready for the table by the time the service was over.

I do not know how many times the Bible was read through by the family in this manner. I do know that all the children learned how to pronounce all biblical names and seemed to know more about the Bible than any of their associates in the neighborhood.

Father was not especially educated for the ministry, but at Bethany College, under the teaching of Alexander Campbell, he had good religious training and liberal instruction in the Bible.

When a student at Bethany he followed the bent of his family for medicine and graduated in the school of Chemistry.

Religiously inclined and having the family intuition for public speaking, he made such an impression as an exhorter, that he was early called upon to lead the prayer-meeting, to serve at the "Lord's Table" and to fill the pulpit at times of vacancies. In the Christian Church, the communion is observed every "Lord's Day." His assistance eventually led to regular preaching, which resulted in forty years of continuous activity. During these forty years, besides filling the pulpit at Fayetteville, he was often called upon to preach at neighboring churches. He frequently supplied at Columbia, Laurel, Andersonville, Fairview, Connersville, Ben Davis Creek, Clarksburg, Greensburg, Shelbyville, Rushville, and other places. He preached somewhere every Sunday, or "Lord's Day" as he called it. When a member of the State Legislature he performed the duties of Chaplain.

He was popular and gifted as the deliverer of funeral discourses, and was called far and wide for that purpose. He performed many marriage ceremonies. Divorces then were rare, but he never consented to perform the marriage ceremony for a divorced person. Only once was he not given a fee for officiating at a wedding. According to the early custom in the Christian Church, he never required nor accepted a fee for preaching a sermon or delivering a funeral discourse, but he accepted fees for performing marriage ceremonies, two dollars being by custom the minimum fee. Always fond of fun and clean jokes he used to tell of an experience where he performed the ceremony for a rather penurious man who was being married a second time. After the ceremony the groom asked my father what fee he charged. His reply was: "Well, it depends upon the kind of woman a man marries. If he marries a very fine lady he usually pays a pretty good fee but if he marries an ordinary woman the fee is not so large." The happy groom handed him fifty cents.

For forty years my father preached for the village church in Orange, or Fayetteville as it was formerly called. Usually, he preached three "Lord's Days" each month. The other Sunday, the pulpit was filled by some one of our preachers from a distance. My own memory goes back to the days of Daniel Franklin, Brother Houshour and Samuel Matthews, who some-

times preached for us. Later we had paid ministers for one Sunday each month. President Otis A. Burgess of Butler College served us two years at \$300 a year for the one "Lord's Day" out of each month. My father paid most of the salary. Love Jameson, Allen R. Benton, a later President of Butler, James W. Connor, D. R. VanBuskirk, Walter S. Campbell and David Matthews, were others from the outside who were employed at intervals. Henry R. Pritchard, James P. Orr, and Harvey W. Everest preached for us. On those Sundays when the local pulpit was filled by a visiting minister, my father was free to preach at one of the other churches. He usually had several appointments ahead. He had many more requests from the outlying congregations than he could fill.

As a preacher, my father was a near-bishop for our section of the State. While the Christian Church has no bishops, his functions were much the same as those of a Bishop in other church organizations. He was a natural peace-maker. Living as he did during the days of denominational antagonisms and hatred, he was kept busy pouring oil on troubled waters. Many times he was called in to arbitrate ugly disputes, and I remember no occasion when his advice was heeded that affairs were not settled amicably. He could discern with unerring judgment the good and the bad on both sides of a dispute. He always said that the good was never all on one side, nor all the bad on the other. He knew how to show such things up without giving offense. He could generally succeed in making the members of each party feel their own shortcomings and errors and could then obtain forgiveness from one group for the other. Much good did he do in his part of the State in this capacity.

He lived a clean, moral, religious, sympathetic and generous life. His example was surely seldom equalled in any community of this State or any other. My father died at this home near Orange in Rush County, Indiana, on June 4, 1896, from cancer of the eye. His funeral discourse was preached by Allen R. Benton, then President of Butler College, a life long friend, and an old classmate at Bethany. When a young man struggling to get a start as a teacher, President Benton lived at my father's house. The text of the funeral discourse was: "Know ye not that a great man and Prince in Israel is fallen this day?" President Benton put his whole heart and soul into the full meaning of his text and with trembling voice and deep sincerity

pronounced a touching eulogy, showing how keenly he felt the loss of his old classmate, who had befriended him at the time when as a young man he had needed a friend—when it meant so much to him to be befriended.

Attending father's funeral there was the greatest concourse of people ever gathered together in that community for such a purpose. Laborers who had served him on his farm drove with horse and buggy as far as twenty miles to pay him tribute and to recount tales of his goodness to them while in his service.

One of my sisters, Catharine, married Vachel Thomas Lindsay and became the mother of Vachel Lindsay. My father did not live to know the fame of this grandson. It would have been to him a source of pride to have known of the enthusiastic welcome accorded to Mr. Lindsay in 1919, when lecturing and reciting at Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He would have been delighted to have read and to have heard the poet recite "The Proud Farmer." This poem was written in honor of my father, Ephraim Samuel Frazee. It presents a clearer idea of his life and work than this sketch and will serve as a fitting close to my effort.

THE PROUD FARMER

Into the acres of the new-born state
He poured his strength and plowed his ancient name
And when the traders followed him he stood
Towering above their furtive souls and tame.

That brow without a stain, that fearless eye
Oft left the passing stranger wondering
To find such knight-hood in the sprawling land
To see a democrat well nigh a king.

He lived with liberal hand, with guests from far
With talk, and joke and fellowship to spare
Watching the wide world's life from sun to sun
Lining his walls with books from everywhere.

He read by night. He built his world by day
The farm and house of God to him were one,
For forty years he preached, and plowed and wrought
A statesman in the field who bent to none.

His plowman neighbors were as lords to him,
His was an ironside, democratic pride.
He served a rigid Christ but served him well,
And for a life time saved the country-side.

Here lie the dead who gave the church their best
Under his fiery preaching of the World.
They sleep with him beneath the rugged grass.
The village withers, by his voice unstirred.

And though his tribe be scattered to the wind,
From the Atlantic to the China Sea,
Yet do they think of that bright light he burned
Of family worth and proud integrity.

And many a sturdy grandchild hears his name
In reverence spoken, till he feels akin
To all the lion-eyed who built the world
And lion dreams begin to burn within.

—VACHEL LINDSAY.