

## **Sarah Farnum Sargent Jackman (1816-1900)**

Sarah Farnum Sargent Jackman was born on December 18, 1816 in Boscawen, New Hampshire. She was the oldest of five children born to Isaac, (b. November 21, 1786 d. December 6, 1825) and Rebecca Merrill Farnum Sargent, (n.d.). Her family was one of the earliest settlers of the Massachusetts colony and the New Hampshire land grants. Her father died in a barn raising accident when she was nine years old. Her mother was left to raise five children and run the family farm by herself.

Sarah went to school in Boscawen and then attended Salisbury Academy where she studied to become a teacher. She began teaching in Boscawen and Warner, New Hampshire before she moved on to study more in Lowell, Massachusetts. She worked as an assistant teacher while attending school in Lowell around 1840. Her salary was \$12 a month which is the equivalent of about \$254 in today's money.

Sarah was a very eloquent writer, having written many letters in the early years of her life. She has been quoted to have said that she considered letter writing an art. She also contributed to the *Offering*, in Lowell, MA. The *Offering* was the first magazine published by women in the United States between 1841 and 1849.

After completing her schoolwork in Lowell, she moved to Quincy, MA to continue teaching. While in Quincy, Sarah contributed poems frequently to various newspapers in the area especially the Boston *Olive Branch*. After her marriage to John A. Jackman on November 22, 1843 in West Newton, MA she gave up her ambitions of being a writer and devoted her life to her husband and raising a family.

She and her husband John moved their family to Bloomington, Illinois in May 1864. The reason for the move was John was promoted to be the superintendent of the Chicago & Alton Railroad which came through Bloomington. Sarah and John spent the rest of their lives in Bloomington at their home located at 507 West Locust Street. They had purchased the home from attorney William Holmes in 1873. Their home remained in their family for many years after their deaths.

Sarah was also very active in community life in Bloomington. She was admired for her compassion and charity towards those who were less fortunate than she. Many who knew her said that she never turned anyone away who came to her door.

Sarah was very active in public philanthropy. She was one of the promoters and charter members of the Bloomington Benevolent Association which organized soon after the Civil War. She was even treasurer of this association for a short time.

Because of her interest in books and literature, Sarah became heavily involved in the reorganization of the Bloomington Library Association. In 1867, because of her contributions and efforts for the library association, she was named to the Board of Directors. She also served as Vice President of the library association from 1870 until her retirement in 1878. She had spent much of her own time and money to supply the library with whatever it needed.

Sarah was one of the charter members of the Women's Educational Association at Wesleyan University in Bloomington. She was also instrumental in getting a place set aside in the Bloomington City Cemetery in "Memory of our unknown dead" during the city's 2<sup>nd</sup> Decoration Day, (also known as The Unknown Soldier Monument).

After her children were grown, Sarah began to focus more of her time on developing her artistic talents. She took up painting landscapes and portraits. She took oil painting

lessons from a noted portrait painter, Albert Jenks of Chicago. She painted two portraits of her grandchildren and several other studies. These works were lost in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 which destroyed the studio where she had worked. She liked to paint landscapes the most but china painting was her best form. She painted many examples, some of which she left to members of her family.

Sarah was very active up until the time of her death. She had been ill for several weeks before her death having succumbed to an acute infection of the throat and lungs. She died on December 17, 1900 and is buried at the Jackman family plot next to her husband at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington.

John A. Jackman was born on March 22, 1816 in Boscawen, NH. After completion of his education at age 21, he became a station agent for the Boston & Worcester Railroad in 1837. In 1852 he became a machinist and he and his family moved to Ohio where he helped open the Toledo and Cleveland Railroad, a part of the Lakeshore Railway System. He served as master mechanic in Norwalk, OH for 7 years.

In 1859 the Jackman family moved back to Boston so John could become superintendent of machinery for the railroad he began with, the Boston & Worcester line. While in Boston he helped facilitate troop movements during the American Civil War.

Besides working for the C & A Railroad in Bloomington, John was one of the directors and organizers of the Bloomington Board of Trade in 1870. The Bloomington Board of Trade was formed to look after the interests of the city, especially of the water works. He worked for the Bloomington Board of Trade until January 1879 when he retired to spend the last seventeen years of his life at home with his family. John A. Jackman Sr. died on July 29, 1896 at the age of 80.

John and Sarah had seven children, five of whom survived into adulthood.

**Caroline "Carrie" F. Jackman Kimball-** was born in November 1844 in Massachusetts. She married Benjamin R. Kimball. They moved back to live in Bloomington after the Chicago Fire in 1871 which had destroyed their home. Caroline died in February 1934 and is buried in Bloomington.

**John A. Jackman Jr.-** was born May 28, 1848 in Massachusetts. Like his father, he was also involved in railroad work in Bloomington. He died on July 20, 1896 in St. Louis. His father, John Sr., was not told of his death because of his own serious condition. John Jr. preceded his father in death by nine days.

**Georgina J. Jackman Soper-** was born in 1851 in Massachusetts. She married Horace W. Soper in 1880. Horace died in 1898 and she moved back in with her family on West Locust Street. She died in 1938 and is buried in Bloomington.

**Frank S. Jackman-** was born on February 21, 1854 in Ohio. He died on May 11, 1911 and is buried in Bloomington.

**Frederick Osborn Jackman-** was born October 23, 1858 in Ohio. He was a doctor. He died on May 30, 1932 and is buried in Bloomington.

By: Candace Summers, 2005