

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 Sargent and Rebecca Merrill Farnum Sargent. Her family had been some of the first settlers in the Massachusetts colony and New Hampshire. When Sarah was nine, her father died in an accident while helping to build a barn, and her mother had to take care of the farm and raise the five children alone.

Sarah went to school in Boscawen and then attended Salisbury Academy, where she trained to become a teacher. She started teaching in Boscawen and Warner, New Hampshire, before moving to Lowell, Massachusetts, to study more. While in Lowell around 1840, she worked as an assistant teacher and earned \$12 a month (about \$254 in 2005).

Sarah was also a talented writer. She loved writing letters and thought of it as an art. She wrote for a magazine called *The Offering*, which was the first magazine in the United States published by women (from 1841 to 1849).

After finishing her studies in Lowell, she moved to Quincy, Massachusetts, to continue teaching. While there, she wrote many poems for newspapers, especially the *Boston Olive Branch*. On November 22, 1843, Sarah married John A. Jackman in West Newton, Massachusetts. After marriage, she stopped writing and focused on her family.

In May 1864, Sarah and her husband moved to Bloomington, Illinois, when John became the superintendent of the Chicago & Alton Railroad. They bought a home there in 1873, where they lived for the rest of their lives. Sarah became well-known in Bloomington for her kindness and charity, always helping those in need. She was also a founding member of the Bloomington Benevolent Association, which helped people after the United States Civil War.

Sarah was very interested in books and helped reorganize the Bloomington Library Association. In 1867, she was named to the Board of Directors and served as Vice President from 1870 until her retirement in 1878. She spent a lot of her time and money helping the library. Sarah was also involved in the Women's Educational Association at Wesleyan University in Bloomington and helped create a special memorial in the city cemetery for "unknown dead," which was unveiled during the second Decoration Day ceremony.

After her children grew up, Sarah began focusing on her artistic talents. She learned to paint landscapes and portraits and took lessons from a well-known painter named Albert Jenks. She painted portraits of her grandchildren and other studies, though many of her paintings were lost in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Her favorite style was landscape painting, but she was best at painting on china. She left many of her paintings to her family.

Sarah stayed active until she became ill with a throat and lung infection. She died on December 17, 1900, just one day before her 84th birthday. She is buried next to her husband at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington.

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.