

LIFE OF SARAH M. PLASKETT
1827-1923

Mrs. Sarah M. Plasket, wife of the late Wm. Lucas Plaskett, who died here yesterday morning at her home, 245 Maple St., was one of the many pioneer mothers in whose honor the statue of "The Pioneer Mother," was erected at the San Francisco-Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. She celebrated her 95th birthday May 1, 1922, it being "Mother's Day," and passed her 96th birthday this year. She had been a resident of Salinas ---- years, all of that time a devout member of the South Methodist Church.

In speaking of the pioneer mother, President Benj. Ide Wheeler paid tribute to such as Mrs. Plaskett, when he said, "Over rude paths, beset by hunger & danger, she passed on to the vision of a better country. To an assemblage of men busied with the perishable rewards of the day she brought the three-fold leaves of enduring society--faith, gentleness & home, with the virtue of children.

Mrs. Plaskett as a girl was Sallie M. Barnes, & was born in Stillwater, Carrollton County, Ohio in 1827, moving to Birmingham, Iowa, when she was 10 years old. There she met & married Wm. Lucas Plaskett. In 1849 her husband came to California across the plains with the gold seekers, returning for her in 1851.

When Mr. & Mrs. Plaskett, with their two little boys, leaving their parents, never to return, made the long journey to California, they took a river boat down the Mississippi to New Orleans, from which city they voyaged by steamer to the Isthmus of Panama. In crossing the Isthmus, they travelled part of the way on muleback, but the women were carried across the Charges River on the backs of Negroes. The little boys, on mules, went on ahead & were out of sight of their anxious parents all day.

The party resumed its journey from Panama to San Francisco by steamer, arriving safely after a voyage of a long number of days. After reaching California the second time, Mr. Plaskett spent some time mining in Cherokee. R.A. Plaskett, their next son, was the first white child born in Cherokee. The miners trusted Mrs. Plaskett with their sacks of gold.

Mrs. Plaskett had many harrowing experiences with the Indians. Once one of the boys shot an Indian's dog for killing their sheep. The Indians responded by coming to the Plaskett's home fully decorated in war paint, demanding the boy so they could kill him. With gifts of sugar, flour & clothes, Mrs. Plaskett succeeded in bribing them, winning their confidence & good will again, thus saving the life of the boy.

Mrs. Plaskett spent 71 years of her long life in California, most of the time, after leaving the mines, in Monterey County. Before locating in Salinas, she resided for 30 years in the Los Burros district, in the extreme southerly coast section.

She was the mother of 12 children, five of whom have passed on before. She leaves 7 children, 62 grandchildren, 114 great grandchildren, and 10 great, great grandchildren.