

## James Hepworth

*Written by his granddaughter, Iris Hepworth Moon, May 1974*

James Hepworth was born in Nethertown, Drighlington, Yorkshire, England, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 1849. His father was Joseph Hepworth, and his mother was Mary Hirst. He was the seventh child of 13 children. The family consisted of seven boys and six girls: Richard, William, Edmund, Squire, Hannah, Sarah, James, Joseph, Elizabeth, Ann, Mary Jane, Martha Annice, and Samuel.

His father, Joseph, was a collier (coal miner) and was the foreman of the Westgate Hill Mines. When James was just a lad, seven and a half years old, he went to work in the coal mines. It was in these coal mines that his brother, William, was killed at the age of 12. He worked in the mines with his father and his five brothers. They began their work at six in the morning, and worked until four in the afternoon. James' work was to take the empty wagons to the men. When he first began his work, he received six shillings a week, or the equivalent of one dollar and fifty cents in US coin. He worked in the mines until he was about twenty and was receiving two pounds a week, or about ten dollars. When he quit, his wage was about the highest wage received in that mine.

He received very little education. An old lady taught him the alphabet, a few of the times tables, and how to read a little.

His father Joseph, was a religious man, and would take his boys by the hand to church. His father was baptized December 19, 1847, when the missionaries came to their home bringing the Gospel. James was baptized June 1857 by William Stockdale, at the age of eight years and three months. His father was President of the branch for 20 years. The boys attended church from nine to twelve in the morning, and two until four in the afternoon. James had said that the janitor or the "dog nobber", looked after the children, and if they didn't keep quiet, he had a long stick with a knob on the end of it, with which he tapped the children on the head. James and his brother would sing for the missionaries at their street meetings. They helped to draw a crowd by their singing.

At the ripe old age of 19, James married Sarah Ann Calloway Armitage. They were married 10 May 1868, in the Parish Church, in the Parish of Birstal, in the County of York. Sarah Ann was a widowed lady of 28. James and Sarah Ann had two daughters, Martha, and Margaret Pearl (Maggie). Martha was born 1 September 1868. Margaret was born in approximately 1872. James became ill during this time with yellow jaundice, and he could not work. He was forced to borrow money for his debts. The man James was indebted to, became anxious and brought him into court. At his hearing, this same man said to the judge, "This man is a Mormon, and if you let him go, he will go down to the docks get on a ship and go to

America, and I will never see my money again.” The judge put James in jail! James vowed that when he got out of jail and started working again, he would save part of his weekly earnings until he could save enough for his passage to America. James left his wife and came to America. Years later, James sent money for the two girls to come to America. Martha would not come as she felt that her father James had deserted her mother. Margaret did come to America, but little is known of her. She did stay a short time with Alma and Leonora Hepworth. She married Peter G. Jensen, and they lived in Brigham City, Utah.

From James' memory, he told his grandson, Robert, that he sailed from Southampton on the Steamship *Wyoming* in 1869. From another record, a James Hepworth is found sailing 10 May 1871 on the Ship *Wyoming*. Cross checking with another record records his age at 25. In 1871, James would be 22.<sup>1</sup>

In his story to his grandson, Robert, he reported that his crossing the ocean was uneventful, with one exception. This particular crossing was the fastest trip to that date. When he arrived in New York, he said that there were paved streets and quite a few large buildings. From New York, he went to St. Louis, and from there he went to Salt Lake City. He arrived in Salt Lake City on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1869 (or 1871). From Salt Lake City, he went to Oxford, Idaho, where his father settled. He arrived there in time to celebrate the 24<sup>th</sup> of July. While he was in Oxford, he herded cattle for a bushel of wheat per head per month. He lived with his brother, Squire, during that time.

James came back to Salt Lake City to live. He was successful in obtaining work. His work was to deliver coal for a coal company. He had to carry 100 pound sacks of coal to homes and apartments in the city. At this time, in apartments there wasn't any space to store much coal, so many deliveries had to be made. One day as James was making his deliveries, he heard women singing, and the door to their apartment was open. James stepped in and began to sing with them in his fine bass voice. This is how James met Melina Smith Taylor.

James and Melina were married 14 July 1873, in Salt Lake City. Melina was 29, and James was 24. Melina had a 10 year old son, Eli, at the time.

Melina had married William Taylor in England, in 1862. They had four sons: William,

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the 1871 census of Middleton, England (page 17), a James Hepworth is listed as living at 78 Low Grange with the widow, Martha Coop, and family. He is listed as a nephew of the head of the household, age 22, married, working as a coal miner, and as being born in Nethertown, Yorkshire. It is safe to presume that the widow, Martha Coop, with whom this listed James was living, is Martha Hirst Coop, the sister of James' mother, Mary Hirst Hepworth, because (1) Martha Hirst married a William Coop in 1853 and (2) Martha's listed age and birth place both correspond with her birth date of 10 June 1832 and birthplace of Armley, Yorkshire. Therefore, through James' listed age, marital status, birth place, occupation and relationship to the head of household, it can be confirmed that this is James Hepworth born 1849 to Joseph and Mary Hirst Hepworth. Thus, it can be concluded that an emigration date in 1869 to the United States would have been **impossible** for James Hepworth. (Footnote added by Sean Knighton, gg grandnephew, 2008)

Eli, Edwin and Heber. She had separated from her husband before she came to America. Her first child, William, had died as a child, and she came to America with her three sons. One son was just under three, and one was three months, Eli was ten. Their sailing vessel took 30 days to cross. One child died three days after Melina arrived in Salt Lake City, and one child died three months later. Eli was her only surviving son.

James and Melina had a family of eight children, five boys and three girls: James, Mary Jane, Samuel, Nephi, Alma, Randolph, Maude Grace, and Melina. They lived in Salt Lake City, where their first three children were born. Then before Samuel, their third child, was two, they moved to Woods Cross or West Bountiful, where they raised their family and lived the rest of their lives.

James contracted to buy five acres of land for \$1,000. Money was hard to come by and it was difficult to make payments on the principle. Eli who was 23 at the time, said to James, "Let Nephi work with me on the farm, divide the farm in half, and we will pay off the loan." And they did! Many farmers took their produce to market, but Eli was the first in the area to pedal his produce door to door.

While the boys worked the farm, James found work in the Hatch Brick yards. His sons, James, Samuel, and Randolph, worked in the brick yards also. Samuel earned the money that bought the bricks that built the home where the Hepworth family lived. Eli, Nephi, and Alma were the sons that worked on the farm. They were all hard workers and all helped their parents.

James also worked on the Oregon Short Line, for which he received \$1.25 per day. After working there about two years, he went to work for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. James helped to build this railroad from Woods Cross to Alamosa, Colorado. He told the story of the china men that worked on the railroad. He told how they (the Chinese) gambled every night, and it wasn't anything to see one hanging on a pole the next morning. He received better pay from this company, about \$2.00 per day. He worked there for three years and then he quit to take care of the farm. James also went to work digging ditches. He was one of the fastest ditch diggers that could be found in the town. Many times he took his pay in wheat or flour. Many of the ditches in West Bountiful were dug by him. Later he went back to farming again.

On their farm they raised vegetables, cows and pigs. Whenever a pig was butchered, James made head cheese. They didn't raise fruit on their farm, so when James went to market he would bring back crates of grapes, peaches, etc., and the children could help themselves to all they wanted.

Melina would help James on the farm, and then he would help her in the house, after the field work was done. This would explain a happy marriage, and a long life of working and loving together. They worked together, played together, and sang together. It was a music loving family. In the early years, James, Melina, Grace and Jack Holden, (Melina's sister and her

husband) sang in a quartet. Melina sang soprano, Grace, alto, Jack, tenor, and James sang bass. Later when the children came along, they were taught part singing, and many evenings were spent singing the old English songs of their parents. Four of their children also formed a quartet; Melina, Maude, Randolph, and Nephi. When any of the family were practicing for an upcoming program, and they began to disagree loudly with each other, James would say, “Melina, take care of your kids!”

James played the violin, and he always held the “fiddle” as he called it, against his chest, never under his chin. He also played the Bass Viol. This instrument was a three string bass. In the early days, James played for many dances at Hales Hall. Hales Hall was located on the southwest corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> West and 5<sup>th</sup> South in Bountiful. He played for admission tickets for his boys to dance. He would carry his bass viol on his back and walk from his home on 11<sup>th</sup> West to Hales Hall, play all evening, then walk back home after the dance. He enjoyed walking through his fields. After the dances he would walk West on 5<sup>th</sup> South to the Denver Rio Grande tracks, North on the tracks to his fields, then west to his home. One night he was walking home on the tracks, with his instrument on his back, when he saw a man coming towards him. The stem of the viol was on his shoulder, and as he approached the man, he said, “Good evening,” and at the same time he pulled up on the neck of the instrument. The stranger broke into a run and ran like mad down the tracks! The dance combos of those days consisted of one bass viol, two or three violins and a drum.

James’ chair that he sat in, in the evening had its back to the door, and Melina's chair faced the door. In the evening as Melina knitted or sewed, James would read scriptures to her, or read stories to her, play his violin or sing old English songs with her. This was a ritual enjoyed by one grandson, Evan Taylor, as he would slip in the front door and sit quietly behind his grandfather's chair. Melina would wink at Evan as he came in. Evan learned the gospel in the home of his grandparents. In the summer evenings the family would gather on the back porch or back yard, and James would teach them the gospel. Grace Hepworth, Samuel's wife said that the finest sermons she ever heard were preached by her father-in-law, James, in his own back yard. James was a good speaker.

Many times he was called out of the audience, with these words, “Brother Jim, would you please come to the stand and wake people up?” No one slept while he spoke! He bore his testimony often. He had a strong testimony of the Gospel and spoke with conviction of the Celestial Kingdom and what it would be like. He was made a High Priest, 23 June 1878, in Salt Lake City, before he moved out to Woods Cross. He was a member of the first High Priest Quorum organized in West Bountiful.

He blessed many of his grandchildren, both children of Nephi and Alice, and seven of eight children of Nephi and Rilda. He confirmed many of the grandchildren also. James and

Melina sent two boys on missions: Samuel to the Southern States Mission, and Nephi to the North Western States Mission.

When James was a young man and beards were stylish, he grew a beautiful black wavy beard. Some of the grandchildren remember when his beard was graying. Most remembered was the white walrus mustache he wore the later years of his life. He was a courteous, very loving, kind, patient man.

Melina died when she was 86, leaving James alone. He lived alone for two years, then he went to live with Nephi, Rilda and family. This family has many fond memories of James, their father and grandfather. Delia, the youngest would sit for the longest time on his lap and comb his mustache. He would sit very still and patient during all this affectionate combing. He would shine the shoes on Saturday afternoon in readiness for Sunday, taking great care to polish them well. He walked a lot, from 8<sup>th</sup> West to 11<sup>th</sup> West, to visit the families of Alma and Dolph. He still sang the old English songs in his last years. It was enjoyable to listen to him talk with that wonderful English accent. He was loved very much by all of his children and grandchildren, and will be remembered always as a gentle, kind and very dear man.

He lived the last six weeks of his life with his daughter Maude and her husband, Bill Harman. James died 22 March 1937 in Salt Lake City.

---

*My thanks to the following relatives for their memories of Grandfather: Rilda Hepworth Andrews, Leonora Hepworth, Leonard Hepworth, Josephine H. Dobbs, Lucy and Evan Taylor, Theresa Hood, Rena Page, and thanks to Robert Hepworth for his history of Grandfather, written when he was a teenager, to Faye H. Davis, and Delia H. Armstrong for their help with records and certificates.*