

CHARLES BALMFORTH

BY Mrs. Harvey Harmon

My father, Charles Balmforth was born in East Millcreek, near Salt Lake City, on August 12, 1871. He was the son of Charles Balmforth and Hannah Hepworth.

His parents were English converts to the L.D.S. Church in the early 1860's. They emigrated immediately to their new home in East Millcreek where Charles' mother operated a small store. He had five brothers and six sisters.

At the age of six years, he drove a team of horses behind his father's team, hauling coal from Coalville to Salt Lake City. Later his father owned and operated a mercantile business. It became Charles's job to split and sack kindling wood for his father's customers.

At the age of twelve, he hired out to a lawyer, Mr. Burmister. It was his job to milk cows and take care of the lawyer's driving team. Later he worked on the narrow gauge railroads. His next job took him to Montana, where he helped his half-brother Alfred, cook and run a butcher business.

On June 28, 1893, he married Sarah Ann Hill, daughter of John Jarman and Emma Maria Sadler Hill, also converts from England. Eleven children were born to this union, two sons and nine daughters. All lived to the age of maturity with the exception of a son, Charles Marvin, who drowned at the age of 2½. The death was a terrible blow to both Dad and Mother, because he was their first son, after seven daughters. I'm sure Dad was looking forward to having a son follow him around and help on the farm. However, as time has a way of healing broken hearts, Dad continued to work very hard on the farm to support this growing family. He used to call his eldest daughter, Irene, his right-hand man, and that she was!

Early in the year 1903, he and his wife Sarah, along with Sam and Annie Hill, moved to Idaho and settled on the John Ritchie place on Willow Creek. They operated a large farm together. That fall, Charles moved his family to Lincoln and helped in the first sugar run at the new Lincoln sugar factory. The year 1905 found him back on Willow Creek operating the Isaac Cooper place.

In 1906, he moved his family to Clark, east of Rigby, where he remained for the duration of his life. He purchased his own farm and also farmed the 160 acres belonging to the parents of his wife, Sarah. Even with the help of a hired man, the 200 acres required much hard work and long hours, but Dad never complained. He seemed to love the good earth and enjoy watching the crops grow.

He loved his horses and would not tolerate anyone mistreating them in any way. He was very proud of his team, Maude and Prince, and always kept them well groomed. He would beam with pride when someone would call to him as he drove by, "Hey, Charlie, that sure is a good looking team you have there." He also loved his cows and had a name for each one. Mother used to chide him about caring more for his horses and cows than he did his family, but she always said it with a smile. I have never chanced to meet any of the men, who through the years had worked as a hired man for my father, but what they told me of their love, admiration and respect for him. He was loved by his neighbors; as they seemed to come to him for advice and help in times of trouble. He was never too tired nor too busy but what he would do all he could to help in any way he could.

He seemed to have a special feeling of compassion and consideration for the under-privileged. Saturday afternoons, when the family took their weekly trip to town for groceries, would find him on the street giving dimes or nickles to the poor kids, who never seemed to have anyone looking after them. He also loved and respected the colored man, telling us that it was a colored man who saved him and his brother Joseph from serious injury or possible death when something frightened their horse as they were delivering groceries from their father's store. It ran away, and they were too young and small to hold the reins tight enough to stop it. It was a colored man who risked his own life to run after them and finally catch and stop the horse while several other men just stood on the street and watched.

During his life in the Clark area, Charles was a counselor in the M.I.A., school trustee for three terms, director of the Rudy Canal Company for several years, and also director of the Lessey Canal Co., until a short time before his death, when he asked to be released due to poor health. He was urged many times by influential people to run for county commissioner but always declined, saying

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he had many friends throughout the county and he wanted to keep them.

He was very devoted to his wife and family. His last words to members of his family at his bedside were, "Take good care of Mother." To me, he exemplified a man who was not afraid to die and meet his maker, for he had lived the very best he knew how. He loved and enjoyed the company of little children and took great pride in his many grandchildren.

It has always been my feeling and that of the other members of my family to try very hard not to do anything that would make Dad and Mother ashamed or disappointed in us. Dad always said, "If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing right." Another one of his sayings was, "Remember who you are and act accordingly." It has always been the wish of the members of his family that they might live as he did, to be respected and loved by those who knew him; to always be fair in their dealings with others as he was. He always said, "If you continue to treat all people fairly and honestly they will treat you the same way."

Dad died at the age of 72 of heart trouble, I think his heart just gave out from so much hard work. He was one of the greatest men I have ever known.