

Life Story of Melina Smith Hepworth

Author Unknown



Melina Smith was born September 11, 1844, at Todenham, England, one of six children. Her father was a cooper by trade but was also a pipe organ builder. At the time of his death, he had an organ partly built in their home. The family was all musical.

The father was the band master of the village, and he, with his three sons, could play 21 different musical instruments. After his death, the family all had to go to work as they were left in poor circumstances.

When Melina was 8 years-old, she went to work in the silk mills 5 miles away, and later she worked in a corset factory. She was always asked to start the evening hymn to close the work at the factory. This was Doxology. Her people were Methodists, but at the age of 16 years, she went with her sister, Grace, to a Mormon missionary meeting, and there they became converted to the Mormon religion. Later she was baptized.

In September 1863, she married William Taylor. Four children were born to them, Eli, William, Heber, and Edwin. She buried her son, William, in England, and later she and her husband separated, and she immigrated with her 3 children to America in September. The year was 1872 at the time. She came to Utah and lived with her sister, Lavinia Mann until October conference when she moved to Salt Lake City where she lived with a family named Lloyd.

She lost her two children, Heber and Edwin, two months after she came to Utah.

On July 14th, 1873, she married James Hepworth. They lived in Salt Lake until 1878 when they moved to Bountiful where they have since lived. She was a high soprano and her husband a deep basso and they, and her sister, Grace, who was a wonderful alto and her husband, Jack Holden, a good tenor, formed a quartette. These singers were welcomed at all religious gatherings for their splendid music.

To her second marriage was born eight children: James, Mary Jane, Samuel, Nephi, Alma, Randolph, Maud, and Melina.



James and Melina Hepworth and family in front of their home in Woods Cross.

They were all taught to sing the different parts and spent many evenings at home singing the old English songs of their parents. The 4 children, Nephi, Randolph, Maud, and Melina, formed a quartette and sang a great deal, and at one time were one of the best mixed quartettes in Davis County.

Melina Smith Hepworth was a woman of strong character whose courage never failed. She was honest, faithful, and true to her religion. She was very industrious, and up to the age of 84 years, she made piece quilts, braided rugs, and numerous articles of crochet work.

She died July 6, 1930, at the age of 86 years, leaving a posterity of 8 children, 52 grandchildren, and 33 great-grandchildren!

An obituary appeared in the "Salt Lake Telegram" on the 7th of July, 1930 for Melina; however, the paper mistakenly wrote her name as "Melva". The obituary is typed here as was printed then.

"Melva Hepworth Dies at the Age of 86.

Woods Cross July 7 – Mrs. Melva Hepworth, 86, wife of James Hepworth, died at the family residence Sunday of general debility. She had been a respected resident of Woods Cross for 49 years.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by the following children: Eli Taylor, Woods Cross; James, Samuel, Nephi, Alma and Rudolph Hepworth, all of Bountiful, and Mrs. Maud Harmon and Mrs. Rees Thomas of Salt Lake.

Fifty-two grandchildren and thirty-two great grandchildren also survive."

Another obituary was printed on the 11th of July in the Davis County Clipper. The typos in this obit were also typed here as printed then.

"Mrs. James Hepworth of West Bountiful Passed Away Sunday

Mrs. Melva Hepworth, 86, wife of James Hepworth, died at her home in West Bountiful, Sunday.

Mrs. Hepworth was born in Stratford on-Avon, England, September 11th, 1844 and came to Salt Lake in 1872. For the last 49 years, she has lived in West Bountiful.

She is survived by her husband and the following children: Eli Taylor, West Bountiful, by a former marriage, James, Samuel, Nephi, Alma and Rudolph Hepworth, all of Bountiful, and Mrs. Maud Harmon and Mrs. Rees Thomas of Salt Lake City.

She is also survived by 52 grandchildren and 33 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Tuesday in the West Bountiful chapel under the direction of Bishop Thomas E. Winegar. There was a very large attendance and numerous beautiful flower offerings. The funeral cortege that followed the remains to the Bountiful Cemetery was unusually long."