

Gleaning the Holyoak Field

--Submitted by our Historian, Minnie Carlile

--Grammatical editions by Chad Nichols

Having been asked to glean the pages of the past for a history of George and Sarah Green Holyoak, I will begin with the words of their youngest child, Hannah. "My parents were prosperous farmers and truck gardeners. Quiet, industrious, religious, and methodical in their habits, and trained their children so thoroughly in those principals that governed their lives that none of them ever deviated there from."

George Holyoak was born January 17, 1799, at Yardley, England. His wife, Sarah Green, was christened at Mosley, Warwick, England, July 16, 1797.

About the time their youngest child was born they learned of a new religion. This new religion was being taught by missionaries from America. People were talking about it. In fact, there had not been so much interest in religion in all of England since the reign of King Henry the Eighth. For George and Sarah Holyoak this new religion had a strange appeal. It was so different from the usual doctrines of the day. It had such a ring of truth yet it was so simple and easy to understand. The unanswered questions no longer haunted their minds. After much study and prayer George and Sarah were convinced that this new religion was the true and tried teachings of the Lord revealed anew and they asked for baptism at the hands of the missionaries. They were baptized June 24, 1841, and began to plan for the time when they could join the body of the Saints in Zion.

Their eldest son, William, born April 12, 1825, at the age of eleven was "bound out" to learn the butcher's trade. This was during the reign of Queen Victoria. Young William's heart yearned for the green grass and the climbing roses that grew about his home, called "Rose Cottage" and he just couldn't like the butcher's trade. At thirteen he was again set at learning a trade. This time, however, it was learning the trade of harness making from his Uncle John Green. This had more of an appeal and he remained with his Uncle until he was twenty-one years of age.

Romance captured young William and he lost his heart to a sweet young girl named Martha Green. They were married in the Church of England, on the outskirts of Birmingham. William and Martha owned and operated a grocery store. Martha ran the store and William worked in a harness factory. After a time Martha's health failed and he took her to his parents' home. There was born their little son Nemiah. Three days later Martha passed away. The loving arms of George and Sarah Holyoak reached out and took their little grandson and cared for him as their own.

William then sold his store and went to Leamington, where he learned the tanners and plasterers trades. While there he met and married Sarah Wilkins and was himself baptized in May, 1846. They were married December 27, 1849 and began to prepare for their voyage to America. When the forty-sixth company of Saints left England on January 10, 1850, William Holyoak and family were among the passengers. Jeter Clinton was president of the company. They sailed on the ship "Argo." The Argo arrived at New Orleans March 8, 1850.

George Holyoak, Jr., sailed on the ship "Ellen Maria" leaving England February 1, 1851.

April, 1851 found the people of England much excited. The government was going to take a census. Doubt and suspicion ran wild as people recalled the "Doomsday Book of William, the

Conqueror" and were afraid that this census would mean more taxes. Many refused to open their doors when the census taker called. Not so with George and Sarah Holyoak, when the census taker called at No 92 Mosley Wake, Green Common, Yardley, England – George was aged fifty-two. His occupation was given as an "agricultural labourer" and his birthplace was given as Yardley. His wife, Sarah, aged fifty-three and was stated to have been a laundress, also born at Yardley. Their daughter Sarah was fourteen years of age and listed as a house-servant. Henry was also born at Yardley and was twelve years of age and listed as a hostler. Their youngest child, Hannah, was ten years old and Nemiah was three.

William and George were on their way to America at this time and their oldest daughter, Mary, who was born May 10, 1827, was perhaps married to John Knowles at this time and had a home of her own. Ann, their second daughter, was probably away at work. Her birth is given in the early church record of Birmingham as January 6, 1832. On April 10, 1853 she was transferred to the Bristol Road branch of the church. She is stated on February 2, 1853, to have gone to the valley of the mountains. This is perhaps meant to have been February 22, 1854, because this is the date of sailing for the ship Windermere.

The youngest child, Hannah, was baptized when she was eight years of age. Because of ridicule by both adults and children alike, she was not permitted to go to school as her former associates were.

The seventy-second company of Saints sailed on the ship "Windermere." There were four hundred seventy-seven Saints on board. Included on board were George and Sarah Holyoak and their children, Ann, Henry, Hannah, and Nemiah. The company was in charge of Elder Daniel Garn. The captain was Fairfield and among the passengers were seven ex-presidents of conferences namely Abraham Marchant, Robert Menziers, Job Smith, John T. Hardy, John A. Albiston, J. Long, and Graham Douglas.

The Windermere sailed from Liverpool on February 22 and arrived at New Orleans April 23, 1854. During the voyage the wind was contrary and often there were heavy gales that interfered with their progress, but at the end of five weeks a favorable wind set in and the ship made a thousand miles in four days. Fifteen days after leaving Liverpool the smallpox broke out on board the ship and spread rapidly as the vessel approached the tropics. Thirty seven passengers and two of the crew contracted the disease. The malady was suddenly checked by prayer. Then they reached New Orleans. Eleven patients were sent to Luzenburg Hospital through an agreement with the health officers at the port. Elder Long and five others were elected to remain at New Orleans to attend the sick until they were sufficiently well to go forward on their journey from New Orleans. The rest of the company continued the journey from New Orleans on the 27th of April on board a steamboat and arrived at St. Louis a few days later, then went on to Kansas City.

Hannah Holyoak, in her history states that they were nine weeks on water. After arriving at New Orleans they took a steamboat up the river to St. Louis where they were delayed because of the death of a sister. This sister may have been Mary Holyoak Knowles as her death date is given as May 1854.

Having inquired I have been told that as the family was sailing a romance had blossomed between Ann Holyoak and Joseph James. They may have married as there were six marriages, six births, and ten deaths on board the ship. At any rate Ann and Joseph were separated by the death of Ann which is given on the family group sheet as August 1854. Later Sarah Holyoak was married to Joseph James and Ann was sealed to him for time and eternity.

The trek across the plains was long and weary and as they were on the plains of Nebraska their hearts became wearier than their feet. They were called to sorrow for the death of their wife and mother, Sarah Green Holyoak. A grave was hastily dug. Her tired body was sewn in a quilt and she was laid to rest in the plains her weary feet had trod. George Holyoak and his children, Sarah, Henry, Hannah, and Nemiah lifted their tear stained faces unto the hills from whence cometh strength and they plodded on to the West.

When they reached Utah, Sarah Holyoak was married to Joseph James and went to Ogden to make their home. George and his son, Henry, and daughter, Hannah, went to Parowan to settle. There they were joined by William and his family, George, the family of Mary and John Knowles, and George Holyoak, Jr., who had married Eliza Moore.

Henry met and married Sarah Ann Robinson, who had been born at Nauvoo, Illinois. They were called to go help settle San Juan. They were among those that went down through the Hole in the Rock, and remained in the area.

Hannah married at the Christmas party, December 25, 1855, to William LeFevre, a young English convert, who had also crossed the plains and settled at Parowan with his mother. Nemiah went to live with his father. When he grew older he married Sarah Ann Harper.

With all his children married George was left alone. However, he found a companionship with Ann Gunn, widow of John Gunn. She had joined the church in London in 1854 and came to Utah with her family of six sons and two daughters. Her husband, John Gunn, had died in 1838 at Stortford, Hertfordshire, England and she had reached Utah in 1860. They lived at Parowan until she was eighty-four years and seventeen days old. After a lingering illness she passed away February 6, 1878. Three years later, October 27, 1881, George Holyoak passed away from this life. His earthly work was finished. He had been faithful to the end. Perhaps if we could have been with him at the end we might have looked on all that he loved, and all that he looked forward to and with satisfaction have used the words of the Savior when he said, "It is finished."