

Life History of Robert Edwards Jr.

Born: 3rd November 1827

Died: 1 November 1893

Came to Utah in the John Parry Company in 1863
Submitted by Emma Jane Edwards Huddleston, Granddaughter
Daughter of the Utah Pioneers of Belvedere Camp

(Transcription by Floyd Edwards)

Robert Edwards Jr. 6th child of thirteen children, nine girls, and four boys, was born to Mary Ann Russell and Robert Edwards Sr., 3rd day of November 1827, in Bloxom, Oxfordshire, England. Little is known of Robert's early childhood. At the age of 18, he first heard of the Mormons and their religion. HE was told of the Missionaries who were holding meetings on the street corners. He attended many of these meetings, and was soon converted, and joined the church. At age of 20 he worked in a steel mill at Winfield, and at 22 met and married Sarah Jubb.

In 1849 in Chapeltown, Yorkshire, England, two children were born to Robert and Sarah. A boy Hyrum, on June 2nd 1850, was born to them. After the birth of this child, Sarah health was very poor. Two years later in December 1852 the second child, another boy, Heber, was born. Both she and the baby died, and were buried together. Previous to this time, Robert and Ezra T. Benson had been called as missionaries, and in the evening of this day were to have a street meeting in the small called Chapeltown. Robert was unable to go.

One person among the people, who had been attending these meetings, was a young girl Elizabeth Huntington, who especially wanted to be to this meeting, because the subject was to be, the first principle of the Gospel. She was very disappointed in not seeing Elder Edwards there. The Elder taking charge excused Robert on account of sickness in the family. After this very interesting meeting, the Elders were called to go to Robert's home. Two of the ladies went also offering their help.

Elizabeth soon took over the care of little Hyrum, who was crying for his mother. She fed and rocked him to sleep. She said he was the most beautiful baby she had ever seen.

Elizabeth mother and father had passed away only a short time before. Leaving her and three brothers. She wanted work, and Robert needed someone to care for his child. So she worked for him.

Robert went back to the steel mill and also stayed with his Missionary work. He soon converted Elizabeth to the church, the ice had to be broken for her to be baptized, but she was so happy she didn't mind or noticed the cold. Two years after the death of Sarah, Robert took Elizabeth for his second wife; they were married August 19th 1855 in the parish of Grease Borough County of York, England. She was truly a good mother to his baby.

He then moved his new young bride to Winfield, to be near his work. Six Children were born to them while living there. Their first, a girl Sarah, born May 26, 1856(named after his first wife). Next came Joseph, April 7, 1858, Moses May 26, 1860, Jane May 23, 1862 (died the same day), Aaron Robert May 13, 1863, Mary Elizabeth, April 1, 1865(who died 14 months later).

While living in Winfield, Robert and Elizabeth had a very remarkable experience. Their son Moses, while still in arms, was never a strong baby, when about 3 or 4 days old he became suddenly ill. Elizabeth called a nurse in. The nurse told her the child was dead. They washed him, tied a small cloth under his chin to keep his mouth closed and covered him with a white sheet. The same day a wheel broke, in the machinery this day at work, and Robert and the men were sent home. Upon arriving home he found the people all around were downhearted and his wife crying. The nurse told him he should go down on his knees and thank the Lord that the baby was out of his misery.

Robert ordered every one to leave the room. He took the cloth off the baby's mouth, patted him three times on the back, moistened his lips, administered to him, and gave the name of Moses, and said to him you are like Moses of old, your life is spare for a good cause, He then handed the baby to his wife and told her to dress and feed him.

Moses lived to be 69 years old. He held many positions in the church, and filled a two year mission to England, worked two years in the St. George Temple. While there he performed 2955 baptisms for the dead, besides many other people in England of his ward, and later was ordained a patriarch by Elder James E. Tallmadge of the council of the Twelve.

After living in Winfield 12 years, Robert moved his family to Birmingham, where he lived on High Gate Street. At this place their son David was born on March 8, 1867. The family wasn't happy here, because they liked to be around Mormon people, and there were none here.

In June of 1868, Robert being in very poor health with asthma was advised by his Doctors to take an Ocean Voyage. They had often talked of going to America and then to Utah. So they decided this was their chance. Robert would go now, and the family would come later, On June 30 1868 he left Liverpool on the ship Minnesota with the John Perry Company. He came by handcart across the plains to Ogden, Utah.

Robert's health improved so much from his Ocean Voyage, and his walk across the plains to Utah. He was ready and willing to start working for the Union Pacific Railroad, which was already in progress.

In sixteen months he had saved enough money to send to the immigration fund at Liverpool (head quarters of the English L.D.S. Mission) for his wife and five children to join him. They were notified that their fare was paid to Utah, and that their sailing date was September 23, 1869, which left his wife only 2 days and 2 nights to get ready.

Their eight child Jesses who was born February 19, 1869 at Sparkley England, a town where the family had moved after Robert sailed for America, had been ill but seemed much better by the time they left.

They were the first of the company at the station. After many good byes and God bless you by many of their friends and relatives they leaving behind. They set sail that evening on the steam ship Manhattan@. After a pleasant voyage of 7 days, Jesse, the baby, again became very sick. On the morning of the 30th of September 1869, he died. Funeral Services were held for him by the Saints who were on board. The baby, wrapped in a white sheet, was tossed over the side of the ship and was buried at sea.

Robert met his family, who were among the first Immigrants who came across the plains in box cars by train. They were eleven days coming from New York. Robert had a big smile on his face when he first saw his family, but tears soon filled his eyes when Elizabeth told him his son, he had never seen, died and was buried at sea. Elizabeth said if father could have only seen his son it would have been much easier to bear.

They lived, for a while, in a place called Lost Creek, in a log cabin, with a dirt roof and dirt floors. They also used grease wood for fire wood.

This place was called Devil Creek, which was near Robert's work on the railroad. Three of his sons 18, 10 and 8 years of age helped cut and trim ties for the Union Pacific Railroad. They all worked until the tracks were laid to Weber County. Then Brigham Young sent the family to Greenville, Utah to help colonize this small town. A wagon with a bed, mattress, bedding and other things. They were soon on their way. The smaller

children rode in the wagon and the older ones walked in their bare feet. They arrived in Greenville November 5 1869, after forty-six days from Liverpool England.

Robert worked for a lot on a large cabin. He also worked for butter and meat. People in those days thought they were very lucky to get 25 cents a day in cash. Elizabeth knitted stockings and sold to help feed their family. She had to work all day just for a lard bucket. Robert was really a brick mason by trade, but he helped build cabins, broke the ground for plowing, aided in making roads, making ditches in every possible way, and helped in civic improvements.

While living in Greenville, two more children, and two sons were born to them. They were Nephi July 26, 1870 and George Henry, May 8, 1872, who only lived a short time after birth.

Robert decided to sell his home and farm in Greenville and move to Beaver, Beaver County, Utah, where he took up farming and his mason work again. It was here their eleventh and last baby was born, a girl, Annie May 16, 1876. The 18th of August 1890 their oldest child, Joseph, passed away leaving a widow and four children.

Robert was a hard working man, a good provider, a good husband and father. He was a staunch Latter Day Saint; He was a sincere, well informed in the gospel, and a powerful preacher. He truly lived his Religion and always in good standing in the church.

In Elizabeth and Robert's 38 years of married life together, five of their eleven children passed away. The remaining six (two girls, 4 boys) all were true Latter Day Saints. Two of his sons, Moses and Nephi filled two year missions in England. The rest of his children held many offices in their wards or branches.

Elizabeth was a good, kind, honest and loving wife to him, and always was at his side when needed. Robert passed way November 1, 1893 at Beaver, Utah. He was buried the 5th of November in the Mountain View Cemetery, Beaver, and Beaver County, Utah.