

John Esplin and Margaret Webster Esplin.

Biographical sketch of the lives of John Esplin and Margaret Webster Esplin, pioneers of 1851, written by Hattie Esplin November 1936, for the "daughters of Utah Pioneers", Orderville, Utah.

All of my grandparents were Utah Pioneers and four of my great-grandparents started for Utah but only two reached the valleys, the other two having died on the way. This history deals only with my grandparents and great grandparents on my fathers side.

My grandfather, John Esplin, was born January 1, 1829 or 1830 in Warden, County of Perth, Scotland. He was the youngest son of Alexander Esplin and Margaret Cambell Esplin. His father was born about the year 1782 and died in 1852 at Lochee, Scotland; and his mother was born in the village of Alyth County of Perth, Scotland in 1787 and died April 23, 1849. Grandfather had three older brothers George, David and William. His father was a husbandman inured to the plough from nine years of age.

In May 1849 the family moved to Lochee near Dundee, where they owned some houses and a plot of ground. Grandfather says in his journal that he when a boy up to fifteen years of age, tended stock in summer and went to school three months in the winter, then served an apprenticeship for three years to James Jack, a tailor.

Of his conversion to the Gospel he writes; "In the spring of 1849 through the instrumentality of John Robertson, an acquaintance and school fellow, I became acquainted with the first principles of the gospel revealed through Joseph Smith. On August 4, 1849 I was baptized in the river Dundee by Elder Richard Brown and confirmed by Elder Hugh Findlay. I rejoiced under the cheering influence of the spirit of God which I received and wondered why others could not believe and embrace the glorious principles that I so much rejoiced in. He says after he found he could not get his relatives to see the utility of embracing the gospel, on the 26 of August 1850, (a year after his Baptism) he started for Salt Lake City. He kept a diary while crossing the ocean, a journey which lasted some eight or nine weeks. He states that there were a goodly number of saints at Perth Station to bid farewell to the company of saints going to Utah.

They spent the night at Glasgow and next day sailed to Liverpool on the steamship "Admiral". Transferring his luggage to the ship "North Atlantic", manned by Captain Cook, he started on the long journey, bidding good by to his native land forever. This ship according to church Chronology by Andrew Jenson (second edition 1899) sailed from Liverpool England with 357 saints, under the presidency of David Sudworth and Hamilton C. Park. It arrived at New Orleans Nov. 1st. (Sister Louisa Cross Spenser was on this ship, she being nine years of age and grandfather twenty at that time, but neither knew this, during their life time and acquaintance in Orderville.

Grandfather states that the crew of the ship was divided into companies or divisions with a president over each division and order and regularity prevailed. On the second week out a severe storm gale and storm came up and grandfather says he suffered severely

from sea sickness, as also did most of the other passengers. The captain and crew were favorably inclined toward the saints and gave them many privileges. Every Sunday the Elders and Saints held meetings on the quarter deck and many useful and beneficial teachings were given.

Elder Orson Pratt addressed the Saints the first Sunday on board the ship before it embarked on the voyage. He went back to England before the ship sailed. Under date of September 29, which was Sunday, grandfather wrote: "Three meetings were held on board today and the gifts of the spirit were made manifest, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues." On another Sunday they enjoyed a spirited testimony meeting.

On October 31, the ship anchored at New Orleans where grandfather boarded the steamer "Sultana" and sailed up the Mississippi river to St. Louis arriving there November 9, 1850. The river being frozen he wintered there and on April 23, 1851 he took passage on the steamer "Robert Campbell", for Canesville (Council Bluffs) Iowa. He worked his passage across the plains by driving team for Joshua Grant who was hauling freight for Dustin Amy, a tinsmith. He arrived in Salt Lake City Sept. 28, 1851. He hired to Charles A. Harper, who lived on Big Cottonwood, Salt Lake County. In Sept. 1852, Charles A. Harper was called on a mission to England and he (grandfather) rented his farm for a year.

On Nov. 10, 1853 he married my grandmother, Margaret Webster, who was born Dec. 2, 1836 in Lankeshire, England. She was the eighth child in a family of fifteen children. Her father, Henry Webster was born Sept. 11, 1796 and her mother, Ann Rigby Webster was born April 13, 1805.

Grandmother accepted Mormonism in England and was baptized there by Elder Samuel Sherret. In Feb. 1849, the family now consisting of eleven children, four having died in England, crossed the ocean in the ship "Josiah Bradley".

Her family stayed in Council Bluffs for several years but grandmother came to Utah with David Dixon for whom she was working. Before starting for the valleys she desired to go across the Missouri River to see her folks and ask permission of her parents to take the long journey, Dixon refused her this privilege, saying he would see her father about it which he did and her father told him he wanted his daughter to come home. Dixon determined to have his own way and told Margaret that her father had given consent.

She arrived in the valleys in 1851. Soon after arriving in Utah Mr. Dixon decided to go to California and wanted Margaret to go with him and be his wife. She refused and found work with another family. She lived at Mill Creek the first winter and in the spring went to American Fork. In the Fall of 1853 she went back to Salt Lake City, her mother, brothers and sisters having arrived from Council Bluffs. Her father her sister, Rachel (age 19) and her brother Henry Edward (age 14) having died in Council Bluffs. The father had cholera morbus, the brother had a sunstroke and the sister had had very delicate health. The father died Dec. 16, 1850.

Grandmother's people after their arrival had some difficulty in finding her. They had a notice given out at a Conference meeting

for the saints to report to them if they knew of her whereabouts. Grandmother was at this meeting but on account of deafness caused by measles when a child did not hear the notice. A short time after this she met one of her brothers on the street, and they were both very glad to find each other. Grandmother then went to live with her mother on Big Cottonwood. She helped her mother raise a garden and also worked for other families.

After her marriage to grandfather they went to Salt Creek, now Nephi in Juab County, to help build up the place. The Walker War was then in progress, The Indians were so troublesome they could not get lumber to build with so they built a house of willows woven together, a dirt roof and the ground for a floor. Their first bedstead was cedar posts set in the ground with willows woven back and forth across the top. Grandmother helped carry the willows from the creek. Their first child, Henry was born here.

Grandfather was one of the guards chosen by Brigham Young to be ready at any moment in case of danger. Under the leadership of M Major T. B. Foote he started for Union square, Salt Lake City on Oct. 10, 1857. On Oct. 26th, thirteen mounted men from his company were called into the mountains to assist in stopping Johnston's Army sent by President Buchanan to chastise the mormons. Grandfather was not one of those called but he had been ready to go at the command of Brigham Young. He returned home Oct. 31st. to perform some domestic duties until further orders.

In April 1861 a call came from the head of the church for the people of Nephi to furnish six teams of four yoke of cattle each also six teamsters and one mounted guard, for the purpose of assisting emigration from Florence on the Missouri River to Salt Lake City. John R. Murdock was the captain of the company which consisted of fifty wagons. Grandfather went as teamster. They left home April 16th, and returned Sept. 12 of that year. They were prospered on their journey and lost but few animals.

They were getting more comfortably fixed in their homes in Nephi when a call came from Pres. Young for them to go on a mission to help settle the Muddy, situated in what is now southeastern Nevada, a blistering alkali desert. Grandfather had never refused a call that came to him and he responded to this as readily as ant. The call came the day their eighth child ~~was born~~ David was born, Sept. 20, 1868. So Grandfather took his second son, John and went to the Muddy to prepare a home for the family, who came down the next year. They went to the settlement called St. Joseph on the Muddy River, living in adobe houses with willow and dirt roof, the houses being built together in a square fort for protection. They raised corn, wheat, cotton and had such garden products as tomatoes, squash, melons cucumbers and sweet potatoes. They were prospering fairly well in spite of the heat, flies, mosquitoes, and ants, when that section was definitely made a part of Nevada. The Nevada officials seemed determined that the Muddy settlers should pay them the back taxes regardless of the fact that they had already paid them in Utah Territory. The settlers sent word to Brigham Young who came down to look over the situation.

He saw what a hard fight the settlers were making, released them from the mission and advised them to make homes in Utah, wherever they chose to go. However, he told them about two small settlements (now Mt. Carmel and Glendale) in Longvalley, which had been deserted because of the Indians, and advised them if it were agreeable to them to settle there. My grandfather states in his journal that he was released from the mission Dec. 1870 and reached Mt. Carmel March 4th. 1871. About 200 of the Muddy settlers came to Longvalley.

Grandmother states in her brief sketch that their ninth child Clara Isabell was two months old when they started from the Muddy; and that her husband and the boys had to stop and make road through the snow much of the way. They selected some good logs as they traveled along to haul for a house when they reached their new home site. The first crop of wheat, the seed being brought from the Muddy, was taken by the grasshoppers. Grandmother and the boys took the younger children and went back to Nephi, and grandfather and the oldest daughter, Margaret stayed at Mt. Carmel. The boys worked at Nephi, raised grain and other products and returned to Longvalley in the Fall with flour preserves and other provisions.

Complying with the council of Brigham Young that the saints enter into and practice the principle of the united order, the people of Mt. Carmel were organized under that principle March 20, 1874 by John R. Young and others authorized by Brigham Young. That Fall about half of the people wanted to disorganize so those wishing to remain in the order thought that more unity would prevail if they withdrew accordingly in the early part of 1875 they removed about three miles above Mt. Carmel and made a new settlement, building their homes together in a square as they did in those days for protection from Indians. On the 20th of Feb. of that year the company was organized and incorporated under the name of Orderville United Order. Grandfather lived only part of the time at Orderville being assigned labor at other places belonging to the company. He took care of the lots in Kanab which had been turned into the company by those joining the order, also raised crops and made molasses at Moccasin. He was one of the first board members (nine in number) of the United Order.

He also took care of a farm a mile above Orderville and raised crops for the order. After the order broke up he secured this farm for himself and boys. here he lived the remainder of his days. He had inflammatory rheumatism for a number of years and also had the misfortune to break his knee-cap which caused a lameness the rest of his life.

Grandmother in speaking of these days says: When the order broke up I thought it was the hardest thing of all to have to start anew my husband a cripple, my boys with young families to support, But I roused up and was very cheerful indeed, and went at it in good earnest and soon got quite comfortable again.

Grandfather died Nov 19th, 1895 and Grandmother followed twelve years later on Feb. 18, 1908. Their posterity number 13 children 97 grandchildren, 175 greatgrand children and four great great grandchildren, making a total of 389, 250 of whom are living. (1927)

John Esplin stands at the head of his family in this dispensation. He holds the keys of the redemption of his family, because he was the first and only one to accept the gospel and follow after it faithfully to the end of his days. He and his wife, Margaret Webster have accomplished a great work on earth. Both embraced the gospel in the old country and remained true and faithful throughout their lives. They bestowed a wonderful heritage upon their posterity -- a heritage of good strong healthy bodies-- with pure blood, free from taint and devoid of heredity disease,-- industrious and active in spiritual activities and physical pursuits, also showing wonderful capabilities in mental activities; and withal a natural love for upright honest living.

1928---

Their children living are Henry Esplin, John and David Esplin, Clara Carrol, of Orderville; Mrs. Minnie Sorenson of Mt. Carmel; Mrs. Persis Heaton of Alton; Mrs. Clarissa Luke of Lewiston, Idaho; George W. Esplin living near Cedar City.

There are 10 grandchildren living in Cedar City also 30 great grandchildren and 2 great great grandchildren.