



**George Eyre
And
Rebecca Hopkin Eyre**

Melvin's grandparents
Shannon's great-grandparents

George and Rebecca Hopkin Eyre

My father, George Eyre, was born in Dowsby, Lincolnshire, England, on April 8, 1838. His parents, James Eyre and Ann Naylor Eyre, lived in a farming community where the farms were owned by the wealthy class of people. Very few, if any of the working class people owned land in England at that time. Although they were able to make a living, they had very few, if any of the luxuries. So little George didn't have a chance to go to school, except what they called an infant school. A place where mothers that had to work left their babies to be taken care of by a woman hired for that purpose. The mothers would take their babies home at night. So my father's only schooling consisted of learning to make pot hooks, as they were called, but he was naturally very ambitious, wanted to learn, and by self effort became very proficient in the three R's at least. His penmanship was better than average.

Rebecca Hopkin was born in Sheffield, Yorkshire, England on March 1, 1832. She was the second child of Edward Hopkin and Hannah Marrison.

Her early childhood home was on a hill overlooking the dams that were the chief water supply of the great city of Sheffield and it was in the woods on the banks of these dams that she spent her leisure time as a child. There were all kinds of nuts berries and wildflowers that she and her brother Joseph had a merry time gathering in the fall times of the year. Her brother used to catch different birds and tame them, several of which he taught to talk. He'd sit under the cage of the bird at night and whistle a tune he wanted to teach it. The next day the bird would whistle the tune perfectly. They also had one bird named George who would parade around his cage and say, "Silence! Pretty George is going to whistle 'Sweet Kitty Jones' ." Then he would proceed to whistle the song. Rebecca and Joseph entertained themselves with birds, flowers, and beautiful surroundings. When mother was very small she was sponsored to go to a school for girls by two old maiden ladies named the Harrison sisters. At school Rebecca was taught to knit and sew in addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Mother was very apt at sewing, and at nine years of age won a prize of a pair of lovely wool blankets for best samples sewing. Her father was a brick mason and made good wages, so the family always had everything they needed in order to be comfortable. When still a young girl, mother went to work in a big steel factory and learned the file cutting trade. It wasn't long until she was making good wages.

Father, at a very early age, was put out to service, as they called it when they hired out work for other people. He worked on a farm until he was seventeen years of age. At that time he heard and accepted the Gospel as taught by the Latter-Day Saints. He was baptized by William Padley, an Elder in the church.

In the summer of 1850 mother first heard the Gospel as taught by the Latter-Day Saints. After prayerful investigation and study, she was converted and baptized by Elder J.V. Long. She was active in the branch and was a member of the Sheffield Choir for ten years.

In May 1856 father was ordained an Elder and labored for four years as a missionary in the British Isles Mission. While in the Sheffield Branch Joseph F. Smith was his traveling companion. One evening while holding a meeting, mother Rebecca and her sister Elizabeth came in. Brother Joseph F. Smith watched them come up the aisle, turned to my father and said, "George, that young lady coming up the aisle will someday become your wife." After the meeting, Brother Smith told the people they were traveling without purse or script and they would appreciate any kindness that could be shown in the way of food or shelter. My mother, Rebecca (who had previously joined the church), and her sister who had never before seen the

Elders came up and said they couldn't invite them to their homes, but gave them a Sovereign each, or 50 cents each in our money. Father and mother's friendship soon ripened into love. They decided to get married and immigrate to Zion, as that was the ambition of the Saints at that time. Their desire was to save enough money to join the rest of the people of their faith.

The church started what they called the Emigration Fund where the Saints could place as much of their earnings as they could spare. When they had saved enough to pay their passage on the boat they were permitted to come to America. Mother, being a very economical person worked extra hours and began to save. Soon she had enough saved for her share, and almost enough for father's fare too. Father, being a traveling missionary wasn't able to save. Up to this time they hadn't told their parents of their plans, but when they began making preparations to get married they knew it was no use to wait any longer. They broke the news as gently as possible, telling them they were going to get married and immigrate to Zion.

Their marriage was not opposed, but to immigrate to America was more than mother's dear old parents could stand. Her parents told her if they would only stay in England after they were married they would help them in every way they could, but if they insisted on going to America it would break their hearts. They pleaded with them to stay. When father and mother told them that they couldn't stay her parents were brokenhearted and said, "If you insist on leaving England, please do not come back after you are married. We could not stand to see you again". So for the gospel's sake they left the cozy little home where mother had spent twenty-nine years of her childhood, womanhood, and her parents, brothers, sisters, and friends that had her life so happy. She and her sister Elizabeth who was also getting married and immigrating, went to the Little Wicker Church with the men of their choice, and were married April 7, 1861.

Her sister went with her husband to his family, but mother and father could not go home. They stayed two weeks after their marriage with mother's Aunt Bessie Robison. She was very kind to them and made them a nice wedding supper and also gave them provisions for their journey on the boat.

April 22, 1861 they set sail on the vessel, "Underwriter" with Milo Andrus as Captain of the company for the saints, with Hans Duncan and Charles W. Penrose as counselors. After drifting and sailing for six weeks they finally landed in New York. They came as far as Florence, Nebraska by rail, then hired out to a farmer there when they found that the company of Saints would not start across the plains for some time. Father worked in the field, and mother in the home, assisting with the housework and family sewing. Here they learned a little about pioneer life. By the time the company of saints was ready to start their journey, mother and father had saved enough to come with them. The nice feather bed they had planned to bring with them proved to be too bulky and they had to empty the feathers out. They spread the tick over the ox yolk to keep it off the wet ground and that was their bed at night. They walked the entire distance from Florence to Salt Lake City, giving place in the wagons the older people. Unless there was an Indian scare they would sing and dance around the camp fire at night. They were as happy as larks. The journey across the plains was beset with many dangers from the Indians, and also from stampeding herds of buffalo. One day during the noon hour mother went into the woods to pick wild berries and got farther away from the camp than she realized. While she was gone the company started, not knowing anyone was missing. Father grew frantic and asked a man to go with him on a horse to try and find her. They thought the Indians had picked her up. When they got back to their campground they commenced looking for her, and you can imagine their delight when they found her making her way back to camp with the berries she had gathered, not

knowing the worry she had caused not only to her husband, but to the company in general. The Lord was on their side and brought through in safety.

They arrived in Salt Lake September 15, 1861. There they were met by father's sister Sarah and her husband Joseph Meyers. Father worked on the temple for the few weeks they were waiting for his brother John to arrive from Minersville where they intended to locate.

After arriving in Minersville they were happy to meet another of father's sisters, Charlotte Banks. They stayed for a time with his brother John, but as soon as they could, they began to build themselves a home. Out of necessity, the material needed to be native. They constructed a little shack from poles and cedar posts, dabbing the cracks with mud to keep out the cold and snow. The furniture was made from cottonwood poles with rawhide laced for chair seats and bedsprings. The only cooking utensils were a bake skillet and one pan used for a dishpan, bread pan, wash tub, bathtub, and many other uses. Sand was used to scour it clean after each time it was used. After a time they built an adobe room and put a dirt roof on it. Mother traded a wool shawl for enough lumber to make a door for it, then used some thin material she had for the window panes. They put a small bin in one corner to put their grain in and spread poles over that for a bed, so they had things more comfortable. Mother soon learned the art of gathering wool from the brush left by roving bands of sheep. Then washing, carding, and weaving it into cloth with which to make their clothing, also to sort the fine straws from the straw stacks then braiding and sewing them together to make their hats.

Mother said no one would ever know how she felt when she arrived in Minersville and saw how the people lived. They were more like Indians than white people. She said she stepped outside the first night and seeing a large enclosure all lit up, went back inside and said, "Oh! You don't have a circus here do you?" Everyone laughed and told her that it was a home of a large family and the lights she saw was the campfire shining through the cedar poles that stood on end, and the fire in the center was all the lights they had. She soon learned that the city training must be forgotten. The luxuries she has always been accustomed to were all a thing of the past and her new life would be one of hardship and trials. Their faith in the Gospel they had embraced was everything to them, and they were willing to adjust themselves to the conditions, and strive to make themselves a part of a people who were struggling gain an existence and their religious freedom.

There was no sort of washers then, not even a washboard. Just two hands to rub the soiled clothes. The only soup was made from the carcass of perhaps a horse or cow that had died in the desert. The lye to make it with was procured by saving their wood ashes from quaking aspen put in a burlap sack and pouring water over it, letting it drip into a kettle. Then what fats they had were put into the solution and boiled until it formed a soft jelly or soap.

The clothes were few and of the coarsest kind, so their washings were not so large, but were hard to do. After the shoes she brought with her were worn out, there was nothing to replace them, so they went barefooted most of the time, to church dances and everywhere. Though, all were alike, so they were happy.

I've heard mother say that one time they were going over to Parowan, about thirty-eight miles away, to a conference, so father made her a pair of shoes from rawhide. The soles were put on with wooden pegs made from birch wood. When they started to go they filled a baking skillet with hot rocks and coals to warm their feet as it was quite cold. Mother put her feet near the hot skillet and the soles of her shoes pulled off. When they arrived in Parowan she was still barefooted. The men were most always dressed in buckskin. When it rained, or they got wet the buckskin would stretch out and drag under their feet. When it dried out it would shrink up to

their knees. Sometimes a caravan would pass through from California and would trade calico or wagon covers for produce, and they would have a dress-up affair. The only dye they had was made from madder berries and rabbit brush blossoms. Mother had to help father in the field most of the time. Father had asthma very badly and was unable to stand the dust from the hay, grain, and corn.

Mother had some very lovely clothes when she came from England which served to dress her first two children very nicely. Mother was very skilled a needle and what she did get in the way of clothes was made to look very nice, even if the cloth was coarse.

No sooner had they started to raise a little grain then their thoughts turned to their native land. Father's father and mother and two younger brothers were longing to immigrate, and had started to work toward that end. Father and Mother would save what they could and put the money in the immigration fund here in Zion and help their family get their immigration money. Father and his brother John both worked and finally had saved enough to bring their parents and two younger brothers to Zion. They were elated to think that they would soon see their parents again and could hardly wait. We can not imagine their disappointment and deep sorrow when they received word from their brothers that their mother had died on the ship and was buried at sea. Their father died crossing the plains and was buried along the trail on Hams Fork between Granger and Fort Bridger Wyoming. There was no marker to make it possible to go back and find it.

During these tears of hardship and privation, pioneering a new and barren country Father and Mother had nine children come to bless their home:

Hannah Elizabeth	born January 25, 1862
Harriet Ann	born July 4, 1864
George Hopkin	born April 22, 1866
James Edward	born December 20, 1867
John Edwin	born November 8, 1869
Joseph William	born October 28, 1871
Rebecca Naylor	born January 22, 1874
Elcey Ann	born November 29, 1875
Charlotte Ellen	born November 21, 1876

To support this family it required a great effort on the part of both parents; Father being in ill health a great deal of the time. However, faith and determination were two outstanding characteristics of the pioneer saints. They did their best to rear and educate their children. Giving them the best there was to be had at that time, which was not much compared to what we have now. The home training was not lacking as far as teaching by example goes. Father was always a sincere church worker. Soon after coming to Minersville on May 22, 1869, he was set apart as First Counselor to Bishop James McKnight. He was ordained a High Priest and worked in the Minersville Ward.

He was constantly in the Bishopric of that ward for many years. He was set apart as Bishop on September 24, 1894. He remained the bishop for eight years until he was released due to poor health. He held many positions of responsibility in both town and county. He was a member of the High Counsel of the Beaver Stake, and also a member of the Church Board of Education. During the time of the United Order he had charge of the men in the fields, and the

distribution of goods to the families. He was also an outstanding character in the community; trustworthy, charitable, and a friend to all.

The Indians loved him. The old chief would say, "Indian heap love George. He our bruder, heap like him. He heap wyno Injun."

In November 1903 he and his mother moved to Lyman, Wyoming where all their children but one son, George H. then resided. Soon after arriving in Lyman they bought a city lot from Bishop Samuel R. Brough and erected one of the first homes on the Lyman town site. Soon that little corner was the wonderland of Lyman and the Bridger Valley. Father was an expert gardener and soon had lawns, flowers, garden trees, and all that it takes to make an attractive home. He took pride in having his home be the best that could be seen even in much older and more cultivated places.

Even though father was growing old and his health was poor, he always remained faithful. October 10, 1914 he was ordained the Patriarch of the Woodruff Stake, which office he held until his death on October 8, 1916. Mother lived seven years after father died. She died March 19, 1923 at the age of 91.