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Biographical Sketch

of

James Gardner

&

Jane Threlfall Gardner

by Zina Forbes Priday, his Granddaughter

Pioneer Year 1855

Sailed on the Siddous

Captain Balantyne's Company

Born 4 June, 1829 in Longton, Lancashire, England

Married aboard ship, 1855

She died 20 Dec 1896

He died 14 Aug 1906

In Longton, Lancashire County, England on June 4th, 1829, James Gardner was born. His parents were converted to Mormonism through the labors of Elders Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde, who were the first Mormon Missionaries to Great Britain. The family were staunch Latter Day Saints and their home was always open to the Elders of the Church. When the young man reached the age of seventeen, he was baptized by Edward Creer on January 24, 1846, being confirmed the same day by John Haesall at Preston, England.

During his young manhood he met and learned to love a young woman by the name of Jane Threlfall who was one year his senior, she having been born July 5th, 1828 at Lytham, Lancashire County. She, also, was a member of the church and the two had planned to emigrate to America and be married upon their arrival here.

So it was that in February, 1855, the young couple in company with his widowed mother and an aunt, set sail on the ship "Siddous", for the new country. They had scarcely began the long journey when the Aunt took sick and died. It must have been a great trial to the three when they saw their beloved relative lowered over the ship's side to her watery grave. After her burial, the two young people decided they would not wait until they arrived in America to be married, and so the ceremony was performed by the ship's captain, he being twenty-six and his wife twenty-seven years old.

After eight long weeks on the ocean, they finally landed on American soil and after being assigned to Captain Balantyne's Company, they commenced the long trek across the plains. When they reached Atchison, Kansas, the mother was stricken with cholera, died and was buried on the Plains. This was a test to the faith of the devoted young son, but from there until they reached Utah, he went among the sick administering to their needs, and helping to bury the dead who were left along the trail.

As it was the fall of the year when they reached Utah, it was too late to plant a crop and for almost a year, they lived on thistles, roots, mushrooms, or anything else they could get. For six weeks they were without bread of any kind. The following summer when his first grain was ready, grandfather Gardner worked all day cutting it with

a scythe and threshing it with a frail, then taking a sack of wheat he rode six miles to the mouth of American fork Canyon, horseback, to have it ground at the mill. The miller, realizing grandfather's dire need, ground the wheat into flour that night and grandfather arrived back home in time for his wife to make hot biscuits for breakfast. I have heard my grandmother say that never did anything taste so delicious as did those biscuits that morning.

Later, the family which now numbered four, moved to the Point of the Mountain but they only stayed there only one year, returning to American fork where they spent the remainder of their lives.

Their first child, William B. Gardner, was born June 10th 1857 and two years later, June 15th, 1859 a girl, whom they christened Mary Jane Gardner. Three other daughters, Ellen, born June 25th, 1861; Annie, March 19, 1866; Lydia, December 10th, 1868; and James T. Gardner born 29th, 1863; making six children in all, completed their family.

From the very first, grandfather was an excellent farmer. He took special pride in his vegetable gardens and usually had the first vegetables of the season. Among other things he raised sugar cane, which was taken to a mill to furnish them with their supply of molasses. Among my mother's earliest recollections was being allowed on very special occasions to take a little bucket to the mill where she was given the "drippings" to take home to be made into molasses candy.

My grandparents were both very staunch in their faith in the Gospel and were both active in the church as well as in civic affairs. He in the Sunday School as teacher and as Superintendent for many years. He served as President of the American Fork Choir and was its oldest member. His wife served in the first Relief Society Organization in American Fork for twenty years.

In February 1858, they received their Endowments in the Salt Lake Endowment House and were sealed in the Logan Temple in February 1890. He served in a civic capacity for thirteen years as member of City Council, and ten years as City Sexton.

In character, he was honest and true, dependable in all that he did or said. He was devoted to his wife and family and although he was stern at times yet he was never harsh. He was a firm believer in keeping the Sabbath Day holy, and "Woe" unto the children if they forgot to black their shoes on Saturday. He was very prompt and efficient in all his work and could always be relied upon to keep his word.

Grandmother was of a very mild, sweet disposition. She had a keen sense of humor and enjoyed a joke. Humble, peace loving, kind, patient, self-sacrificing, she was an ideal wife for her Pioneer husband, her neighbors all testified to her generosity and helpfulness. As there were no doctors in those days, she and her neighbor, Sister Nelson, took care of each other in their sickness. For many years she helped out the meager income by making and selling yeast. Her happy disposition helped greatly in carrying her through the struggles and trials of Pioneer life. She died December 20th, 1896 from Dropsy at the age of 67.

On June 16, 1898 grandfather Gardner married Mrs. Thomas, but she only lived three months. He was again married February 20th, 1899 to Hannah Vowels with whom he spent the remainder of his life. He died August 14, 1906, respected and loved by all who knew him.