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Biographical Sketch

of

William Armstrong

Pioneer Year 1853

Sailed on the Old Windermere

by Elizabeth Coddington

Born 6 Jan. 1805 in Glasco, Scotland

Died 4 April, 1895, in American Fork

Following is a life sketch of William Armstrong, early pioneer, read by Mrs. Thomas Coddington at the Daughter of the Pioneers meeting last week.

William Armstrong was born Jan. 6, 1805, in Glasco, Scotland and was the eldest son of William Armstrong, third grandson of Hohnie Armstrong, who was one of the swordsmen of the Queen of Scotland guardsmen. He started to work when quite young as a glass blower later learning to be Chemical manufacturer, which profession, along with soap making, he followed while in Scotland.

When young he married but the following year there came a little baby girl to their home that cost the life of both mother and baby. He remained single a number of years. He began to feel uneasy and decided to go to England. After being there a short time and being interested in the chemical part of the factories he met Catherine Crodock, who was one of the spinners there. Their friendship grew until finally, on Oct. 22, 1838, they were married. Catherine Craddack was born at Old Berry, England, November 22, 1818. They remained in England for a number of years and having good employment they were getting along fine. While in England they had three daughters born to them, Mary, Margaret and Jane.

While living there the L.D.S. missionaries visited their home and they began to investigate and soon were baptized into the church. Immediately their friends began to shun them and treated them badly and his business was not so good. There was a real good friend of grandfather's who told him that as long as he remained in England they would never have a son and with business not being very good they decided to go to Scotland, and make their home.

They left Sponelade, West Bromswick, England, and went back to his native land. After arriving there he got good employment and he was happy but grandmother disliked Scotland very much and never was satisfied until they decided to return to England. While in his native country two sons were born to them, John and Joseph. Grandfather was always superstitious about a great many things and always said he would never have had a son had he stayed in England. They returned to England, but were never satisfied on

account of the feeling that existed among their own people as well as their friends and then the spirit of gathering with the saints had taken possession of their hearts and they wanted to come to Zion where they could worship God unmolested. They began to make preparation to come to Utah and it was no easy task for on January 1, 1853, another little son, William, was born to them and they now had six children.

In the early spring they left Sponlade, for Liverpool and waited until the Saints were ready to emigrate. They set sail in the early spring of 1853, on the Old Windermere sailing vessel and were on the ocean nine weeks. Landing in New Orleans they had a very rough voyage. The families of John and Thomas Proctor came in the same company. On the return trip of the Wandermere to England it was heavily loaded with salt and a storm sent the ship, with its whole crew, to a watery grave. It was an old ship and while coming here it leaked several times but those people were trying to do right and serve our Heavenly Father and their lives were protected. Their baby had been sick most of the way and so they decided to rest a short time and went to St. Louis and then on to Omaha. Here they had to make preparations to get some other mode of travel. Grandfather bought a wagon and six head of cattle, one a milk cow, but she helped pull the wagon as well as furnish milk for this family of eight.

After getting the necessary teams and wagon he did not have sufficient means to emigrate so President Brigham Young told him he would help and he could pay the church back when he got here. The independent company was just ready to start and grandfather wanted so much to come with that company and they were very pleased that they were able to come with the Independent Company. Grandfather often told of the number of wagons and oxen, he said there were fifty wagons with three yoke of oxen on each wagon. Just after crossing the North Platte river there was a buffalo stampede which struck the whole emigrant train but the saints picked up their belongings and no one hurt.

They finally arrived in the Fall of 1853, at Salt Lake City, and were taken in by a Dr. Rickards until Grandfather could get employment. The first work he got was stripping bark off red pine

trees for the tannery in Cottonwood canyon. While working there a man told him to bring Jack and help harvest some potatoes. He went for they had nothing to get along with and while there, William the little son, who had been sick most of the way here from England, died. He was buried at Union Fort.

After this grandfather was forking in Cottonwood canyon getting out logs and a big log fell on him breaking his hip, which was never properly set. This left him a cripple. He henceforth had to use a walking stick, one leg being much shorter. He worked there for about two years and then another child, Catherine, came to bless their home.

In 1855, they moved, with Johnson's army to Camp Floyd, where he and the boys hauled wood and did their freighting while Grandmother and the three girls washed and ironed for the soldiers. Here they did real well and were able, in a short time, to earn the money for their emigration and they were surely happy when Grandfather took President Brigham Young five hundred dollars in twenty dollar gold pieces to pay in full all that they had borrowed to get here. Now they could earn some for a home. He was very liberal with donations to the church but he seemed not to remember his family in an educational way, as there was only part of them who got any schooling at all.

While in Camp Floyd his daughter, Mary, was married to Lewis Strasburg, the army bugler. This family numbered fifteen children; Margaret was married to William Peters, a Latter-day Saints convert, this family numbered seventeen children; Jane married John William and to them were born five children, she dying and leaving a small baby girl. Grandmother was a mother to this family and in the year of 1862 moved to American Fork where William and James were born making nine in the family.

They bought a little home in the north east part of the enclosure of the Fort with Coopers on the south side and Watermans on the north side as neighbors. Having saved a little money at Camp Floyd Grandfather bought 100 acres of bottom land, part of what is now known as the A. W. Buckwalter farm. He was a large land owner in

American Fork at one time but disposed of it a little at a time. He and the boys used to mow all those acres of hay with the hand scythe and oftentimes the snow would come before it was all harvested.

He was a true Latter-day Saint and was never afraid to bear his testimony, in every fast meeting or where an opportunity afforded itself. At the age of eighty one years he thought that he would like to go back to Scotland and see the brothers and sisters but part of them were still hateful towards him on account of the Gospel. But, he had a nice visit and got a lot of genealogy. On his return trip the sea was rough and he was thrown against the side of the ship, breaking three of his ribs. Arriving home he and his wife and daughter, Kate Chadwick, went to the Logan temple and had the work all done for his father's family and all that he could get of his genealogy.

At the age of Ninety-two William Armstrong died at American Fork, April 4th, 1895, leaving a large posterity to honor his name. He had four daughters and four sons, with large families.