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Biographical Sketch

of

Joseph Barlow Forbes

by Willard Done and Zina Priday

Born: 29 Jan 1840, Bangor, Maine

Married: Nancy Dayton, 1 Jan 1866

Died: 5 May 1927, Goshen, Idaho

Joseph Barlow Forbes was of royal descent. One of his ancestors was Salvathius Forbes, who married Morvilla, daughter of King Gregory the Great of Scotland, about 870 A.D. All of the Forbeses of Scotland descended from this union, among them several barons of Scotland. Forbes Castle is still a conspicuous landmark there. The first of the line to emigrate to America, so far as our records show, was John Forbes, Who with two of his brothers came from Scotland and settled at Enfield, Massachusetts in 1740. A little later a family named Gilpatrick located at Orland, Maine, near Bucksport on the Penobscot River. John Forbes had a son named Joseph, and his son, also named Joseph, married Sarah Anna Gilpatrick September 6, 1835. Shortly after the Forbes family moved to Maine. They had nine children, of whom Joseph Barlow Forbes was the third. He was born at Bangor, Maine, January 29, 1840. He died at Goshen, Idaho, May 5, 1927.

His boyhood was spent in Maine, where he received a common school education, which was later supplemented by some high school and collegiate training in Maine and in Boston where the family later moved. An Uncle was a prominent ship-builder of Bangor, and young Forbes took every advantage of his opportunities to become acquainted with ships and shipping. He made two trans-Atlantic voyages in his youth, one taking him to Sicily through the Straits of Gibraltar, and the other around the Cape of Good Hope, to India. After his return from the second, when he had decided to become a navigator, the Civil War broke out and he immediately volunteered. In April 1861, and went to a training camp at Willett's Point, Long Island. When the training period was over, he joined the forces at the front in Virginia, and took part in numerous engagements from the first Battle of Bull Run until the close of the Peninsular campaign under General George B. McClellan. In 1863 he was invalided out, having been promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant in the Second Maine Volunteers.

Shortly afterward he was arraigned to military duty in California, and sailed from Boston around Cape Horn to San Francisco as Second officer on the sailing craft, Pocahontas. He went from there to Chicago, In the Sacramento Valley, where he was on the

staff of General Bidwell as adjutant general, with the rank of Major. After residing here for some time, he and another young man went on horseback to Idaho City, Idaho. The town was burned on the night of their arrival, and the two set out for Salt Lake City, traveling the entire distance on horses and arriving in the summer of 1865. Joseph B. Forbes met President Brigham Young in Salt Lake, and was introduced by him to Bishop Leonard E. Harrington of American Fork, where he became a teacher in a subscription school including pupils of both sexes and all ages and grades. Here he was destined to spend nearly all the remaining sixty-two years of his eventful life and accomplish most of his splendid labors. This was in the year of 1865.

In 1851 Hyrum Dayton crossed the plains with his family. Shortly after their arrival in Salt Lake City a daughter was born to them whom they named Nancy Dayton. A few years later her mother married Isaac Cooper, who adopted Nancy as his daughter. The family home was in American Fork. The date of Nancy's birth was September 14, 1851. She attended the school conducted by Joseph B. Forbes, and on January 1, 1866 they were married, Bishop Harrington performing the ceremony. To this union were born thirteen children, four sons and nine daughters. Two sons and one daughter died in childhood. Two sons and eight daughters survive, in addition to numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

After teaching in American Fork one school year, Prof. Forbes and his wife moved to Midway, Wasatch County, Where he had taken a position as a teacher. This was in the fall of 1866. On January 29, he became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The baptism was performed by Elder John Huber, and the new convert walked in his wet clothing a mile to his home. He later taught in Riverdale, Weber County. In the fall of 1869 he was recalled to American Fork by Bishop Harrington. Here he established the first free school system in the then Territory of Utah, and his educational work went on without interruption in American Fork.

On April 10, 1879, he married Mary Jane Gardner, in the endowment house in Salt Lake City. She was the oldest daughter of James and Jane Trelphall Gardner, early pioneers of American Fork. She was also a student of Joseph B. Forbes. To this union were born

eleven children, three boys and eight girls, two boys and four girls preceded him in death, leaving the mother, one boy and four girls with a number of Grandchildren and one Great grandchild.

In the fall of 1888 he moved with his families to Conejos County, Colorado, Where he was teacher, Superintendent of schools, and merchant until 1897, when he returned to American Fork to resume his teaching. In the meantime he had taught in the Latter-day Saints' College, Salt Lake City, during the school year of 1895-1896.

His residence in American Fork continued until the death of his wife, April, 1926. In the fall of 1926 he moved to Goshen, Idaho, Where he lived with his plural wife, Mrs. Jane G. Forbes, until his death on May 5, 1927. The body was brought to American Fork, and funeral services were held in the Alpine Stake Tabernacle on Sunday, May 8, 1927. At the time of his death and burial the flags on the public buildings of American Fork flew at half-mast. As the funeral cortege passed through the streets to the Tabernacle, hundreds of school children lined both sides of the street and each place a flower on the bier. After impressive ceremonies in the church, the ritual of the Women's Auxiliary was performed at the grave, and taps was sounded by a bugler who had once been a pupil of the deceased.

In religious and civic activities Prof. Forbes was unusually prominent. Most of his work in these directions was done in American Fork. He was a city counselor for some year, and also served as City Recorder. He helped prepare the first ordinances of American Fork City, and wrote copies of them to post on walls and trees for the information of citizens. He kept the records of the city so neatly and accurately and in such excellent penmanship, that competent judges pronounced them a model for other municipalities. He was the first president of the Y.M.M.I.A. in American Fork; was a prominent member of the ward choir; and leading man in the local dramatic company. He was also active in the preparation and staging of musical entertainments. He retired from these activities when he was about 82. His teaching labor ended at 79, making him the oldest teacher in point of service in Utah.

His fellow-citizens bestowed on him many marks of honor. The most significant of these was given April 15, 1921. On that day hundreds of his former pupils and other friends joined in the celebration of "Forbes Day," paying him a tribute seldom equaled in any man's lifetime. On January 1, 1916 and on the same day in 1926, he and his wife celebrated their fiftieth and sixtieth wedding anniversaries, being joined in the festivities by their families and friends. There was named for him in American Fork a school-house, "The Forbes Building"; and a tree was set in a cement base, also named for him.

Before his retirement from active teaching, an educational writer came to Utah and prepared an illustrated sketch of his life and educational labors, which was published in the Middle West School Review of Omaha, Nebraska, in its issue of September, 1914.

Thus is epitomized the earthly career of a man who will always be held in high esteem by thousands who have known him and his influence for good. No one who knew him could do other than love him; every life that his life touched was immeasurably enriched; and when the roll of earth's noblemen is completed the name of

JOSEPH BARLOW FORBES

will be among the brightest and most excellent.