

HISTORY OF WILLIAM LIPTROT

(1809 - 1881)

by: Alta R. Ashby & Fonda R. Wilhelmsen

About a half year after Abraham Lincoln was born in a rustic, pioneer log cabin in Kentucky, another special baby was born on the 27th of September 1809 at Parbold, Lancashire, England. His name was William Liptrot, our great-grandfather, whose future destiny was to play a major role in the saga of his great family.

His parents were Thomas Liptrot and Mary Jackman Liptrot. His parents and his grandparents were farmers; who also lived at Parbold. The family belonged to the Church of England. On October 25, 1809, William was christened into this church at the Douglas Chapel in Parbold. Parbold seems to have been the residence of the Liptrots for many generations.

William kept a journal for a few short years after he emigrated to Utah. The journal he used had been prepared for Latter-Day Saints in England to keep their family records in. The book measured 6 X 1 and 1/2 inches long and 8 inches wide. It was bound with a marbled paper and the spine was brown bearing the title 'LATTER-DAY SAINTS FAMILY RECORD' printed in bold, gold letters. (The book has been placed in the L. D.S. Archives, Church Historical Department in Salt Lake City, Utah so it can be accessible to all interested family members. 1988.)

The following explanatory information is printed in the front of the book: "This order of Family Record was introduced into the Manchester Conference (mission) of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, November, 1852 by Johnathon Midgley, under the Pastoral Charge of Cyrus H. Wheelock, and when Samuel W. Richards was President of the British Isles."

William Liptrot had the journal several years before he made his first entry in 1873. Thankfully, he recorded the names of his wife, children, his parents, brothers and sisters, his wife's parents and children, plus some of his grandparents.

He capsulized his first 53 years of life in England into three or four paragraphs. He wrote with black ink and in neat, well-formed hand writing. We quote as follows:

"1873 - Being an account of the life of William Liptrot, written by himself.

"William Liptrot was the youngest son of Thomas and Mary Jackman Liptrot, born September the 27th 1809 in the township of Parbold, in the Parish of Eccleston in the County of Lancashire England, Europe.

"Married Elizabeth, second Daughter of Peter and Elizabeth Hesketh by whom he had 6 children, 4 boys and 2 girls. (If he forgot his marriage date he wouldn't be too different from some of his descendants.) We lived in Bedford, near Leigh, Lancashire 10 years, then moved to Hindley, where we embraced the gospel. My wife was baptized 30th day of August 1850 and my children, 3 in number, Grace, William and John, were baptized on the 20th day of June 1852. I was baptized in November of 1850.

"My two eldest died at their birth. My third child, Thomas died on the 30th day of January 1841, aged 1 year and 9 months. My wife was born on the 8th day of January 1805 and died on the 29th day of December 1857 and was interred at Hindley Parochial Chapel aged 52 years, 11 months and 20 days. My eldest son William died on the 19th day of December 1858 aged 16 years, 1 month and 6 days and was interred at Farmington Cemetery, Davis County, Utah Territory."

William Liptrot's paternal grandparents were Thomas Liptrot and Alice Tonge Liptrot, she becoming his third wife after Thomas's first two wives had died. (See Appendices for wills of Thomas and Alice). His maternal grandparents were John Jackman and Margaret Spencer Jackman. (See Appendices for will of John Jackman.)

Parbold, where William was born, was a township in Eccleston Parish and was 5 and 1/2 miles north-west of Wigan. Nearby were the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and the River Douglas. Many barges and ships moved people and freight along these waterways. Parbold was not very large, having a population of only 475 people when William was born. Usually lovely and green, Parbold Hill was the highest eminence in the Liverpool, Wigan and Croston area. On a clear day one could see these cities and many others, also the Atlantic Ocean. Parbold Hill commanded a good view to the Isle of Man, and to the mountains of Wales and Cumberland. William must have enjoyed gazing out over the picturesque country side. He must have loved to walk along the roads which were lined with trees, shrubs and stone fences.

He may have sailed on the River Douglas and on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal with his uncle William Spencer, who was his maternal great-uncle. William Spencer owned two packet boats (called flats), named the "Ellen " and the "Bee" that made regular trips along these waterways. Being the youngest child of the Liptrot family, William must have received a great deal of love and attention.

William was educated in the local grammar school. Not all children born at this time had the privilege of attending school and learning to read and write. Many young children were required to work in coal mines or get employment

where ever they could to help supplement the meager incomes of their parents. Apparently William hadn't had to do this. His having been able to write and thus record his family's genealogy has saved his posterity a great deal of time and money in research.

William Liptrot was a farmer as his father had been. Most of his life he followed this occupation except for a time when in the 1851 census we find him listing his occupation as a grocer.

In 1832 William Liptrot, of Parbold, was recorded as the "Occupier" of 28 acres of land called "Town House Farm". "Occupier" meant that he was renting the property. (This information was taken from "LIST OF PERSONS ENTITLED TO VOTE 1832", # 4354.)

Elizabeth Hesketh, William's wife, was born at Blackrod, Bolton Parish, Lancashire. Her parents were Peter and Elizabeth Files Hesketh. The Heskeths had moved from Skelmersdale in Ormskirk Parish and then to Blackrod just about 4 years before Elizabeth was born, February 10, 1805 (the same year as the Prophet Joseph Smith). She was the third child and had seven sisters and two brothers. The Peter Hesketh family lived at "Long Lane" which was located midway between Hindley and Hindley Green where William and Elizabeth had moved to. (See Appendices for map of Hindley.)

In the 1841 English Census, William Liptrot's family address was Grange Farm, Leigh. He was the "head of the family, a farmer, married, 30 years old", his wife Elizabeth was "33 years old" and his only living child, Grace, daughter, was "5 months old."

Prior to this their daughter Mary Liptrot had been born, about 1836 and died at birth. Next son William was born and he too, died at birth. On the 28th of April 1839 son Thomas was born at Grange Farm, Bedford. Sadly Thomas died on the 30th of January 1841, age 1 year and 9 months old of scarlet fever. Grace, our grandmother, had been born just 17 days before her brother's death. We can well imagine the family's sorrow and also the concern that baby Grace would not contract the sickness.

Almost two years later, on the 13th of November 1842, another son also named William was born and a year later, the last child, John was born December 2, 1843. Some time before the summer of 1850, the family moved to Hindley where the Mormon missionaries found them. Nothing is known about their conversion except the dates of their baptism. Elizabeth was baptized on the 17th of June 1850 making her our very first English convert. How indebted we are to her! For some reason William wasn't baptized at that time but later on the 2nd of

November 1850 he too entered the waters of baptism. He was baptized by Elder Samuel Broadhurst, who was president of the Leigh, L.D.S. Branch and confirmed the same day by Elder Richard Booth. Like many other converts, they suffered their share of persecution for joining the Church.

William Liptrot was later endowed on February 2, 1865 in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City.

None of Elizabeth's Hesketh brothers, sisters or parents joined the Latter-Day Saint religion, nor did any of William Liptrot's family.

The 1851 Census lists William as "41 years old, Elizabeth 45, Grace 10, William 8 and John 6." The children were "scholars" and William, the father was a "grocer".

Just six years after they had joined the Mormon Church, Elizabeth became ill and died 4 days after Christmas, on the 29th of December 1857 of causes unknown. She was interred in the Peter Hesketh burial plot in Hindley at the Parochial Chapel, on January 3, 1858, next to her sister Mary Hesketh who had died in 1838. The inscription on her tombstone, called a "Monumental Inscription" reads as follows: "PETER HESKETH SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MARY DAUGHTER OF PETER AND BETTY HESKETH WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE 27 MARCH 1838 AGED 25 YEARS; ALSO OF ELIZABETH, WIFE OF WILLIAM LIPTROT, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE DECEMBER 31, 1857, AGED 52 YEARS." (Fonda Wilhelmsen and her daughter Jeanette Anderson found the tombstone when they visited Hindley in 1961.) When we first read the inscription we thought that Peter Hesketh was buried there, in Hindley also, but he actually died in 1858 at Bickerstaffe, Ormskirk Parish. He was buried there on 5 July 1858, age 76. Peter Hesketh's wife, Elizabeth Files Hesketh was also buried in Bickerstaffe on 16 June 1854, age 76. (Burial information for Peter and Elizabeth Hesketh was obtained from St. Catherine's House, London, England, death certificates. Copies are in the possession of Alta R. Ashby, Lehi, Utah)

A few days short of a year later, son William, age 16, died on 19 December 1858. Sadly, only father William and daughter Grace and son John, were left of what had been a family of eight. One wonders if the reason William Liptrot had written so little about his life in England was because of the sorrow he experienced there.

In the 1861 Census we find William Liptrot living alone at 195 Ladies Lane, Hindley, Lancashire, England. Grace had married John Rigby the year before on 16 September 1860. William listed his occupation in 1861 as that of "agricultural laborer".

A severe depression gripped Lancashire at this time. Its major cause seemed to be the Civil War which was raging in the United States. There was no supply of Southern cotton for the cotton mills in Lancashire.

Many people were destitute as a result of the scarcity of work. The Latter-Day Saints were being encouraged to gather to Utah and they were being assisted by the Perpetual Emigration Fund for those who couldn't afford their own fare. Probably due to these inducements William Liptrot, son John Liptrot, daughter Grace Liptrot Rigby and her husband John Rigby decided to emigrate to America.

The shipping lists, wherein were listed the immigrants, showed the following information about our relatives:

NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	ADDRESS
William Liptrot	53	farmer	Hindley, W.Wigan
John Liptrot	19	---	ditto
John Rigby	32	collier	ditto
Grace Rigby	23	wife	ditto

British Mission records state that they sailed on the Ship CYNOSURE.

Undaunted by the knowledge that America was engulfed in a Civil War and knowing that the journey ahead entailed a 5 week crossing of the Atlantic Ocean in an old sailing vessel THE CYNOSURE, the Liptrots and the Rigbys embarked on the 30 of May 1863. One pioneer later commented that the worst part of the entire journey - walking across the plains and all - was the time spent aboard the creaking, often smelly ship. The crowding and lack of ventilation, sickness and even death made the time very difficult. Church services were held on deck when the weather permitted and the Saints did a lot of singing to pass the time. It was a joyful day when they landed at Castle Gardens in New York in July. Though only 5 weeks of their projected 4-month journey was behind them, they felt optimistic; no doubt believing that the prospects of land-travel would have to be an improvement over their passage by ocean.

A train was their next mode of travel. In some cases cattle cars, were pressed into service because the war efforts needed all available railroad cars to transport troops. When they arrived in Florence, Nebraska, a few days were spent getting out-fitted with wagons, oxen and supplies to cross the plains. John Liptrot had been ill with dysentery while aboard the CYNOSURE and didn't seem to get any better, what with their constant traveling. His weakened condition necessitated

riding in the jolting, covered wagon so Grace walked most of the way.

There were three emigrant wagon trains that reached Salt Lake City on October 4, 1863. They were the Horton D. Haight Company which had 200 persons and about 30 wagons; the John W. Wooley Company which had 200 persons and 30 wagons and the Thomas E. Ricks company which had 400 persons and about 60 wagons.

The following information was taken from the L.D.S. Church Archives:

CAPTAIN THOMAS E. RICKS COMPANY - EIGHTH CHURCH TRAIN

Captain Thomas E. Ricks train of about 400 emigrating Saints, most of whom had crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the ship "CYNOSURE" left Florence, Nebraska, August 10th. By telegram to President Brigham Young it was learned that this company was camped ten miles below Pawnee Springs on August 24, all well. The train arrived safely in Great Salt Lake City, October 4, 1863. (Church Chronology Journal History, Sept. 16, Oct. 4, 1863, Deseret News 13:64.) No roster of this company has ever been found. We do not know which company the Liptrots and Rigbys crossed the plains with.

It was late in the season and cool. The family needed to get settled before winter and determined to move north to Ogden. Another Rigby family from Lancashire had settled in Farmington. Hoping to get help for the critically ill young John Liptrot, they stopped to visit them. However, his pitiful condition was beyond help and he died on October 8, 1863. Their compassionate host, Brother Rigby took up the floor of his cabin for a casket for John's burial and he was interred in the Farmington Cemetery. The bereaved family pushed on to Ogden where William settled while John and Grace went on to Burch Creek to live with a man named Robinson. William bought a lot with an adobe cabin on it. The water supply was a well north of the house from which water was pulled up - hand-over-hand. The cold winter passed and William planted a lovely garden at his Ogden home. After the Robinson venture proved to be a poor choice for John and Grace, Grandfather Liptrot had them come and live with him while they acquired a home. They lived in the Ogden Third Ward.

In 1869, after the births of his first three grandsons, John, William and Joseph, they all moved to Hooper, Utah - west of Ogden. Hooperville, as it was then known, was the site of much homesteading. The Rigbys and William took up a tract of land and started to farm.

Though William made entries in his journal indicating that he had written to relatives in England, we have a copy of only one letter which was written by niece, Mary Ellen Liptrot. Following is the letter:

Blackrod

March 19, 1867
William Liptrot
Hooper, Utah

My Dear Uncle---

We received your kind letter the latter end of the month of February which was most welcomely received by all of us. We are very sorry that we neglected to answer the last one Dear Uncle, but, do not think that it was out of any disrespect that it was omitted, but what was negligence as we are so very busy in the _____ and Father has got so infirm that he is scarcely able to do any thing but walk about and look over and that is very hard work for him. Sometimes he has such a deal of pain in his legs that he has had another partial stroke about Christmas which has rendered him more injury than before but we are very thankful that God has spared him to us a little longer. We are very glad to hear that you are so well and happy, and that you are satisfied with the position in which God has placed you for.

I believe that it was his will, that you should go forth from amongst us into a strange land; it is done for some wise purpose. God works in a most mysterious way his wonders to perform.

Mother has not been very well this winter but the weather has been so very cold and severe that not many people have been able to stand it. Sister has been better this winter than she has been in a long time before, and so has our cousin Dinah, she has not had such a bad cough nor been so short of breath as before. She is staying with us a few weeks at present as you will see by the letter enclosed in ours.

I must tell you that Uncle Henry has not stood the cold weather so well. He has been very poorly and is looking older like the rest. Thomas is growing up and begins to be very useful to his father on the farm, the girls and aunt are very well, Uncle has not seen anything of William. At Wigan this long time and we have not heard of any change.

Aunt Alice came up to hear your letter read and seemed quite interested she was very glad you are so settled and comfortable in your new home, they have given up the farm but still live in the same house. We all send our kindest love to Cousin Grace and John and are glad to hear that she has presented her husband with a second son. And you never told us the name of the first. The man that brings the Wigan papers did not come yesterday but we will send you one the first opportunity.

I must conclude with our united love to all, I remain,
 Your affectionate niece,
 Mary Elizabeth Liptrot.
 (Her father was Thomas Liptrot who was born in 1798.)

William Liptrot began his journal in about 1872 and he continued it until 1880. The entries were very brief -- not even full sentences. But they did chronicle daily events and important happenings in the family. It seems that every day held some major farming activity such as "going for sage brush (for fuel), harvesting crops, planting crops and gardens, going to church when weather permitted, taking care of the animals, going to Ogden for supplies, working on building the school house, building the church house, etc." The laborious work of wresting crops from virgin, arid soil went on and on. However, there were some recreational pursuits recorded such as going to conference in Salt Lake City, parties - now and then, and patriotic assemblies.

Following are some of William Liptrot's journal entries: "fixing gate in stockyard, John fixing ditch, fetched 2 loads of sage, John surveying, John sowing wheat, harrowing, planting potatoes, planting beans, cut wheat with macheen (sic), raking wheat, John threshing for Flinders, Ogden for corn, killed the sow, John took corn to be ground, John hauling manure. March 4, 1873 John bought 1 lot from B. McClay, John watering lot. April 14, 1872 - very, very deep snow."

William Liptrot was a tall man - 6 feet, 3 inches - and weighed 190 pounds most of his life. In his later years he became stooped and then weighed about 235 pounds. This was two years before he died.

He was a thrifty, industrious man. His journal attests to his hard daily work. Towards the end of his life he seemed to have been occupied in making and repairing shoes. Self reliance was one of his many virtues. He kept records of farm sales and expenditures and his shoe business.

Around the middle of June 1881, William Liptrot became ill with "quick dropsy". On Saturday, the 18th of June, he died. The next day, Sunday, June 19th, he was interred in the Hooper Cemetery. Funeral services were held at home. On a Sunday, July 3rd, the Rigby family went to meeting where Brother T. S. Johnson preached his funeral sermon.

His grandson, John Thomas Rigby, paid the following tribute to his grandfather to whom he was devoted: "Grandfather was a faithful, upright and devout man, a firm believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ from the time of his

baptism until his death. He was a fair speaker in public and had the gift of faith and healing."

"Though he never married again, he was sealed to his wife's sister Mary Hesketh in the Endowment House, October 26, 1870. She was born March 25, 1813 in Blackrod and died at age 25. Grace stood proxy. William Liptrot was devoted to his daughter Grace.

John Thomas Rigby attributed much of his early basic schooling to the efforts of his Grandfather and Mother. Grandfather Liptrot had taught John T. to read, write and do "sums" or arithmetic. His later profession of school teaching was chosen largely due to his Grandfather's influence. William Liptrot had been a good role model for his grandsons.

In John Thomas's diary, he records that when he settled his Grandfather's estate, he as administrator, sold the Hooper property for \$7,225.00 to H. Rolap and T. J. Stevens. William Liptrot had acquired a fair amount of personal property and land in the 18 years he resided in Utah. By pioneer standards he had done quite well. He had earlier maintained that he was far better off in America than he had ever been in England.

William Liptrot lived a long, eventful, industrious, good life. We, his descendants, can be grateful for his acceptance of the gospel plan in England and for his pioneering efforts in America and that he always kept the faith.