History of Stephen Smith
by
Joseph Theron Smith
written in 1991

Introduction

My interest in writing a short story about great grandfather Stephen Smith developed while I was deeply involved with finding out whether his temple ordinances had been done. Although I found the ordinances were completed, to my amazement I discovered that only a few sketchy pages about Stephen's life were ever written.

A preliminary search of my father's (George Stephen Smith) records revealed the following information - one page written by Rachel Anderson Smith and about two pages written by Nellie Smith Orr. The only record of his church activities mentioned was joining the Mormon Church in England after listening to the missionaries when he stopped in Logan on his way to Wyoming and had his family sealed in the Logan Temple.

After my personal visit to Cowling, Keighley, Yorkshire, England, where I had the good fortune of meeting with a cousin Jack Smith who was kind enough to transport me around, visiting some of the scenes where Stephen lived early in life, the urge to write a history grew even stronger with my bosom.

After finally locating additional information about the life of Stephen Smith and his family, I wish to share it with his offspring.

My Visit to Beautiful Yorkshire

A personal glimpse of Cowling, Keighly, Yorkshire, England from a hill-top advantage point above the rolling green hills I saw typical small farms divided with miles of stone walls. My mind's eye also viewed this spectacular scene, focusing on several small farms that could have been one where my Great Grandfather Stephan Smith lived.

Riding with my English cousin Jack Smith from Steeton, Keighley, Yorkshire, England only added to my excitement as he made inquiry at one of the farmhouses if anyone would know which farm John and Elizabeth lived on when Stephen was born. He came back to the car and pointed toward an old broken-down cabin and said "that's the place". The feelings I had deep within my bosom is hard to describe in words.

Jack drove me into Steeton to the site where Stephan once lived in a modest home. The home was torn down years a and I managed to get a picture of the site and surrounding buildings. We also drove to the old "bobbin mill" where Stephan began working at an early age. The once-pride of Steeton is now only a memory but a picture

I got shows the building is still standing, with all those memories of a busy place for my ancestors to help eke out a living for their families.

Beautiful Yorkshire, England

Stephen Smith was born in Cowling, Yorkshire, England the 25th of August, 1847. He was the son of John and Elizabeth Smith. His Mother's last name has not been properly verified by we are certain her first name was Elizabeth.

Cowling is a beautiful small - typical English Yorkshire village, built at the base of green rolling hills, dotted with small the farms divided by miles of stone walls (neatly stacked on top of each other without any mortar to hold them together). Stephen must have enjoyed living in this small, quiet village where he had oodles of space to play with his sister Mary Ann and brothers Thomas and William. Jack Smith, a grandson of Thomas, Stephen's brother, pointed out that the broken-down shack where Stephen was born is still visible from a country road about a mile away. If only we could dig into the shack's history and verify detailed events that happened when Stephen and his family lived there. Housing conditions were reported to be very poor in this part of England in 1847. Families were forced to "grin and bear it" during both the extreme hot and cold weather conditions. England is on the same parallel as Alaska and usually experiences similar cold weather conditions each year.

Stephen's talents were developed early in life. He was the oldest child in the family and at an early age began working in the "bobbin mill" in Steeton a small town only a few miles from Cowling. It is not known for sure when his musical talents developed, but he played several instruments and had a beautiful singing voice.

After Stephen met and married Martha Ann Lund on the 26th of December 1866, in Keighley, Yorkshire, England. They moved to Steeton and lived in a home not far from the bobbin mill. The home has since been razed and a recent picture shows only the empty space where Stephen and Martha's modest home once provided them a place to live with their growing family.

A recent picture of the "bobbin mill" also shows signs of great deterioration but must have been a great "learning place" for Stephen. The 1871 Census indicated Stephen was a "worsted weaver", a position he reached through hard work and self-motivation, even though life in the mills was very hard on even the most trusted workers.

The marriage certificate indicates Stephen and Martha could only make an x for their signatures, usually revealing their inability to read or write. But some Family History writers claim a certain stamp was used for signing such documents and that many persons knew how to read and write. We believe both Stephen and Martha Ann learned how to read and write. Our search for any property Stephen may have owned in Cowling or Steeton was not provided us with any definite proof. Also we have been

unable to find any wills for Stephen or John his father.

Five children were born to Stephen and Martha Ann while in England: Joseph William, John Edward, Thomas Henry, Clyde Arthur (& baby Smith) who were twins but died at childbirth.

While working hard to provide for his family, Stephen met with the missionaries and joined the "Mormon" Church. They were baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on 9 Oct 1881. He managed to scrape up enough money to buy passage on the SS Wisconsin 11 April 1885 and came alone to America until he could send for his family in April of 1885. Martha Ann, Joseph William, John Edward, and Thomas Henry came obtained passage and sailed on the SS Nevada from England to the United States on October 24th, 1885 (same ship as Anthony H. Lund, a prominent figure

GRANTSVILLE, UTAH

Stephen and his family settled in Grantsville, Tooele County, Utah, a little town West of the Great Salt Lake. Living in this small town at first was a humbling experience for Stephen and his family. In England they had lived in some very populated villages, all within walking distance of each other. Grantsville was a very small, isolated town about 30 miles from Salt Lake City.

At first they lived in a log hut located on North Main Street owned by a Mr. Wrathall. Some reports indicate his daughter Beatrice was born here while other records show she was born in a house he built on the West side of town. The home was later razed and Frank Hammond built a new home and sold it to Alvin Sample who moved to California.

Despite Stephen and his family having to suffer a few hardships, he managed to purchase some ground on the West side of town and built a home. Beatrice (Martha Ann) was reported to have been born here on the 21 July 1888 about a year after the house was built (however verification has yet to be established).

Soon after Beatrice was born, Stephen received an job offer from a Mr. Burton in Star Valley, Wyoming to work on his farm. He bundled up his family and started on the long journey, managing to stop in Logan long enough to be sealed to his family in the temple on 11 September 1889. Stephen at that time, gave his mother's name as Elizabeth Bannister. But the marriage certificate received from England shows her as Elizabeth Myrrl. (My cousin, Jack Smith, from Steeton, England believes William Bannister might have married a Myral before he married Elizabeth).

Stephen was probably appointed manager of Mr. Burton's farm. He not only

looked after the huge herd of cattle, but was in charge of the entire farm operation. The family lived in an apartment behind the store owned by Mr. Burton. The reason for leaving this job and moving back to Grantsville has never been recorded anywhere. Stephen moved into a small adobe house located on Main Street owned by John Brown. This house along with others along Main Street have now been razed and a new shopping mall has been constructed over the sites.

Soon after moving back to Grantsville, Stephen was offered a job as Superintendent of a grist and flour mill located in Milton, Utah, a very small community East of Grantsville. He made several trips a week into Grantsville, in a wagon drawn by a team of horses, to deliver flour to the coop stores - then on the return trip picked up grain at the old tithing barn. The mill was recently restored under the direction of Jack Smith, a great grandson of Stephen. Pres. Ezra Taft Benson and his Father ran the mill and asked that it be restored, along with the little house where Stephen and his family once lived. Brigham Young once owned the mill, also.

Jack never knew that our Great Grandfather Stephen ran the mill but we are still looking for evidence. Jack was also not aware that the family lived in the little adobe house near the mill. It was the scene of many family gatherings. Martha Ann was gifted with music abilities and played the organ and concertina. Although she was under 5 feet tall, slender with brown hair and blue eyes, she was an excellent mother and wife. Her expertise as a knitter showed up in her living room where there was a beautifully woven rag carpet on the floor, crisply curtained windows, a reed organ plus some plush settees with chairs to match, a small low rocking chair, Martha Ann's favorite. An old-fashion center table with a fancy oil lamp hanging directly above it could be found in the room. Many family pictures and of friends were found everywhere and keepsakes of England were also found in various spots.

We aren't sure that the kitchen stove, so clean you could see your reflection in it, is the same one Grandma Rachel Smith had in her kitchen, but we can see a possibility. Grandma Rachel must have been trained by Martha Ann to keep the "cooking stove" so clean during her lifetime.

Stephen suffered a heart attack on one of these trips into Grantsville and passed away before a Doctor could be summoned in Jan of 1895. I found his tombstone in the Grantsville cemetery and took a picture of it - both he and Martha Ann are buried side by side.

According to our Aunt Nellie Orr, after Stephen's death, his two sons Thomas and Jack, along with a close friend Fred Miller, operated the grist mill. Later Martha Ann moved her family into Salt Lake City where she ran a rooming house while the boys found work at the railroad yards.