

SAINTS ON THE SEAS

23 September 2001

August 2001 marked the 150 year anniversary of the migration of converts of the Church from Europe and the British Isles.

An organization called The Sea Trek Foundation is sponsoring an amazing re-enactment of the crossing of the Atlantic ocean of thousands of Saints as they came to Zion.. This special journey started in Esbjerg, Denmark Aug. 7 and will conclude Oct. 4 in New York City.

Ten "Tall Sailing Ships" will sail to eight ports in Europe as they portray the "Gathering" of the Saints, and then three of them will sail across the Atlantic Ocean to Bermuda, and then to New York City.

On Mother's Day of this year, Steven and Robin surprised me with an invitation to accompany them, on the last leg of this reenactment. We will meet the ships in Bermuda on Saturday the 29th of Sept, and sail the last 5 days into New York harbor. We will be aboard the "Europa", a Dutch ship. There was to have been a final Concert, called "Saints on the Seas" at the Madison Square Garden, but this final celebration has been cancelled because of the terrible happenings in New York during the past week. We still plan to fly to Bermuda on Tuesday night, and enjoy some Scuba diving before boarding the "Europa" on Saturday Sept. 29th.

I have been getting more excited as the weeks have flown by, and recently I have taken the time to read the Journal histories of our ancestors, and these records have helped me realize that many of my ancestors, as well as Lynn's, were among those early "Saints on the Seas"

PAUL GOURLEY:

My maternal Great Great Grandfather Paul Gourley was born 8 Feb. 1812 at Fintry Parish, Sterling, Scotland. He was the son of Robert Gourley and Nicholas Paterson.

Paul married Margaret Glass in 1838 and they had five children; Robert, Alexander, Nicholas, Janet and George. Margaret was born at Lanark, Glasgow, Scotland. Margaret died in 1852, and two years later married Ellison Japp and they had two children, Paul and Margaret.

Paul joined the Church when he was a young man, and served as the Branch President in Holytown, Glasgow, Scotland. He was quite a prosperous man, but when the call came for his family to gather to Zion, the Gourley family gave up all of their possessions to make the long trip to America. In Feb. of 1856 Paul and Ellison, and their 7 children crossed the ocean in the little sailing ship "Thornton."

The journey took seven weeks. It was a rough voyage and for six days the ship was lost at sea. The experiences of this week were often told to the family, recounting to

them how much they were taught during those days, as they all had to put their trust in God. It was important schooling in preparation for the hardships ahead of them with the Martin handcart Company.

MADS POWELSON:

My maternal Great Great Grandfather Mads Powelson (sometimes listed as Paulsen) was born 13 Sep 1905 in Egtved, Vejle, Denmark. He was the son of Paul Mikkelsen and Maren Sorenson. Mads married Dorthea Christine Mikkelsen in 1833. They owned a large farm where they raised stock and general farm vegetables. Dorthea was the first of the family to be baptized into the Church along with her daughter Maren, and it was Dorthea who urged the family to come to America.

Mads was in the King's guard in Denmark. He and his wife, had testimonies of the truths of the Gospel. They soon decided to leave their home and unite with the Saints in Zion. They sold their farm and were financially able to be well equipped to come to America.

The family, including their 6 children, embarked on the ship "Benjamin Adams" in 1854, arriving in New Orleans 44 days later. During their passage up the Mississippi, an epidemic of cholera broke out, and 154 of the group died, including Dorthea. She was buried in Kansas City, Missouri. She left six children, Maren, Mikkel, Anna, Hannah, Powell and Sern, ages 9 to 2. Mads and the children completed their journey by ox team and reached Utah in the fall of 1854. They made their home for a time in Ephraim, later moving to Provo, and then to Goshen.

BARRY WRIDE:

My maternal Great Grandfather was born 4 August 1833 in Llantressant, Glamorganshire, Wales. Barry was the son of Danson Wride and Ann Davies. He was baptized in the tailrace of what was called the Little Mill near Cardiff, Wales, on March 27, 1857. His sister Mary was also baptized. Barry labored in the kingdom and presided over the Cardiff Conference for several years. He felt it a great honor when he was able to show Apostles Charles Rich and Amasa Lyman around Cardiff and Swansea, for them to see some of the old castles of Wales.

Emigrating to America was uppermost in Barry's mind. Upon his release from his position as President of the Cardiff Mission District, in the spring of 1861, he returned home to make preparations to leave with other Saints. Barry's sister Mary and her husband David John, were also planning to leave. His father, Danson, gave him 50 pounds Sterling to finance his journey. His journal notes; "Myself, and two sisters parted with Father and Mother, Brothers and Sister for the Gospel's sake. The date of our departure from the Graig Farm was 10 April 1861".

Barry arrived at Liverpool, England on the evening of 11 April 1861 ready to sail on the Packet Ship "Manchester." At the instruction of Apostle Charles C. Rich, he married his wife Hannah Selman, then a single woman, at Liverpool, on 13 April

1861. They had been friends for some time, but had not set a date for marriage. Bro. Rich set the date for them. Obviously it was easier for them to travel as husband and wife.

Following their sea trip across the Atlantic Ocean, they traveled by carriage, boat, and train to Florence Nebraska, then on to Utah where they settled in Provo, and then resettled in Payson.

WILLIAM OPENSHAW:

Lynn's maternal Great Great Grandfather was born 3 Sept 1795 at Radcliffe, Lancashire, England. He was the son of William Openshaw and Jane Walne. William's wife was Ann Walmsley Greenhalgh. She was born at Breightmet, Lancashire, England, 9 May 1806. They joined the Church in 1840, and were baptized in Bolton, Lancashire, England. They were parents of 7 children, Roger, Samuel, Eli, Levi, Mary, Eleanor and Mary Ann.

William labored as the first counselor in the 'Breightmet Fold Branch' from 1841 till the time of his emigration to Utah in 1856. In 1854 he sent his two older sons, Roger and Samuel, on ahead to Utah to prepare the way for the rest of the family. The parents would follow later, with their 5 other children.

On 25 May 1856, the the family left Liverpool, England on the ship "Horizon" They landed at Boston 30 June 1856; from there they went by railroad to Iowa City, Iowa. They expected to travel by team to Utah, but were disappointed when there were no teams available to them.

They joined the Martin Handcart Company on 28 July 1856, and suffered the terrible hardships of that Company before arriving in Salt Lake City on Sunday 30 Nov. 1856. In all the privations and hardships they had experienced after leaving England, William's faith and trust in God grew stronger. He realized God had protected himself and his family through their long journey to Utah.

ELIZABETH (LIZZIE) ECKERSLEY:

Lynn's maternal Great Grandmother was born 27 June 1842 in Farnsworth, near Boulton, Lancashire, England. She was the daughter of Jesse Eckersley and Mary Hague. Elizabeth was only 4 years old when her mother died. Her father remarried when she was eleven. Lizzie, her father and step mother joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1853 and were determined to emigrate to Utah that same year.

Lizzie often spoke of the homesick feeling she had when the ship began to sail out of port. England's beautiful church bells were ringing as they left. She wanted so much to stay in England with her aunt and uncle. The sailing ship on which she traveled was six weeks on the sea. During this trip small pox broke out, and she saw

two of her friends die of the disease, and were sewed up in sheets and thrown overboard into the ocean.

When the company reached the Missouri River, they were put into a boat on which people had been with cholera. A great many of their company contracted the disease, including her own father Jesse Eckersley.

She later recalled that he was perfectly well when he kissed her good-night, one evening, but later her stepmother came to her bed before daylight and called, "Lizzie, come quickly if you want to see your father alive. Don't stop to dress." She ran to his bed, and he died just as she reached him. He was buried on an island in the Missouri River. Thus Lizzie became an orphan at the age of eleven years, as she entered a new land.

FREDERICK JOHN WALL:

Lynn's maternal Great Grandfather was born in Birmingham, Warwickshire, England 25 March 1825. He was the son of Thomas Wall and Nancy Ann Sketchley. Frederick married Sarah Williams on 16 Nov. 1845. He was converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was baptized in Feb. 1849.

He and his wife and 2 small daughters, Emma and Sarah, left their homeland for America, 8 Jan. 1851 on the sailing ship "Ellen." One of the girls died before they reached America, and the other one died soon after they arrived in Utah.

In 1852 Frederick purchased and outfitted a covered wagon, and left Iowa for Utah. As they were traveling along the Platte River, on the way to Utah, Sarah gave birth to a baby girl. They named her Martha Platte Wall. The family arrived in Salt Lake City Sep. 25, 1852, settling in Manti, Sanpete Co.

He later met and married Elizabeth Robinson on 3 Dec. 1856.

UNDER SAIL TO ZION:

In June of 1840, the Packet ship Britannia left Liverpool harbor, bound for New York. Among her passengers, she carried the first organized emigrant company of Latter-day Saints. There were 41 British converts aboard.

This voyage was the beginning of a period when thousands of newly converted Latter-day Saints migrated from the Europe to Zion. Between 1840 and 1890 at least eighty-five thousand Latter-day Saint converts braved that crossing. Some fifty thousand of them crossed the ocean in sailing vessel. But after 1868 they came in steam ships. History records that many vessels were lost at sea, but there were no ships lost while transporting Latter-day Saint converts.

Saints on the Seas will be a fantastic opportunity for me to feel closer to these great ancestors, and experience just a little of what they went through. I have just read a Journal entry about the "Horizon" (the ship William Openshaw and family were aboard.) There were 856 traveling on that small ship—the same size as the "Lehnkuhl" that is now on the way to Bermuda with approximately 150 on board. Even with 150 on board now, they report that the space seems cramped. To have 856 on this size of a ship, everyone must have been packed in so tight that they would hardly have space to move. And in those early days, they had to bring and prepare their own food. Six weeks on the seas would seem an eternity. I can only imagine the homesickness they must have felt as they thought of their own home and the beautiful lands of Denmark, England and Switzerland. It must have been almost unbearable.

I am so thankful for my ancestors, and those of my children. These pioneers were great stalwarts in the kingdom. They had firm testimonies that carried them across the ocean, and on to Utah, despite terrible hardships. I know that I owe my membership and testimony to these great people. I am thrilled with this opportunity and will share my thoughts with the family later.