

LIFE OF LEHI NEPHI HARDMAN

The following is a sketch of the life of my Great Great Grandfather Lehi Nephi Hardman. He was the son of Richard and Margaret Holden Hrdman.

At the time Joseph Smith uttered the words that "the field was white all ready for harvest" and he had been moved upon to open a mission in the British Isles. Richard and Margaret were living near the little town of Preston, Lancashire, England.

Preston is located about thirty miles north of Liverpool on the grassy banks of the River Ribble and sixteen miles inland from the Irish Sea. Preston is a cotton weaving center and the continuous clank of cog wheels fills its winding hedge hemmed streets. It is known in England's history as the birth place of Sir Richard Arkwright who invented the spinning machine. But of still more importance to a Latter Day Saint is its known and recorded in church history as the birth place of Mormonism in the British Isles. For it was in this town that the first Gospel sermon was preached. On Sunday July 23, 1837, Heber C. Kimball rose in Preston Vaunhall to deliver Mormonism's first sermon in Briton.

When the missionaries, seven in number, rode into Preston in their horse drawn carriage, cheers filled the streets, bands were playing, and flags were flying. But all of this was not for the first missionaries. They were bringing humbly and unheralded, a strange message into a strange land. The excitement was over the parliamentary election of Queen Victoria who had a few days before began what was destined to be the longest reign in British history.

As the missionaries alighted from their coach, they noticed a large streamer unfurled before their eyes, and upon it in gilt letters was written these words, "Truth will Prevail". This was Victoria's slogan for the election.

Beholding the banner, the elders exclaimed in ecstasy, "Amen". Thanks be to God, Truth will Prevail. This was their keynote from the beginning, and Truth did prevail against the most severe criticism. Converts were made by the thousands. Among these were Richard and Margaret Hardman, who became the parents of Lehi Nephi Hardman.

Just at this time Margaret Hardman was bedridden. She had suffered ill health for several years, having given birth to seven babies within a period of about twelve years. All of these babies died during birth or within a few hours after birth. During the birth of the eighth child she had contracted a disease known as milk leg. She became an invalid too weak to rise from her bed and her legs would break out with sores that would not heal. During these several months of confinement she became greatly depressed and felt that she might never walk again.

She desired so much that she might have a son, but this hope was fading and it seemed impossible that she could give birth to another child.

While in this state of physical and mental anguish she had a dream which she related to no one. In the meantime the elders visited their home and gave them literature, and taught them the truth of mormonism. They did not immediately accept the new doctrine because they were members of the Church of England. But after several months study and contemplating they became convinced of the truthfulness of the Gospel. Margaret was unable to walk so had to be carried to the stream to be baptised. After being baptised she walked home. Her legs healed instantly and she was never troubled with the disease again. This was November 22, 1838.

Several months later in the year 1840, Brigham Young visited their home and while in conversation with him, Margaret related the dream which she had that the elders would lay their hands upon her head and from whom she would receive a blessing. She told Brigham Young that one of these elder

she had never seen but described him.. He told her it was Wilford Woodruff who was on his way to England at that time.

Upon the arrival of Wilford Woodruff, he accompanied Brigham Young and several other elders, to visit Margaret Hardman . When Brigham Young asked her to show him the man she had seen in her dream, she immediately pointed to Wilford Woodruff. He and Brigham Young placed their hands upon her head, and gave her a blessing and promised her that she would give birth to a son, whom she should name Lehi Nephi after the two great prophets of the Book of Mormon and that he would live to accomplish a great work.

A year later, June 12, 1841 the baby she had been promised was born, and she did name him Lehi Nephi as she had been told. This was my Great Great Grandfather.

When He was four months old the family emigrated to America to join the main body of the Saints. Leaving Liverpool in the fall of 1841, they came all the way by water which took about six weeks. Arriving first at New Orleans, they then continued up the Mississippi River to Nauvoo.

They were living in Nauvoo at the time of the Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum, June 1844/.

About four years after the family's arrival in America, Richard Hardman received word that his ~~two~~^{two} sisters Betty and Alice were coming to this country. he was overjoyed and could not wait for them to arrive so decided to take a river boat and go down the Mississippi to meet them in St Louis. He worked on the boat to pay for his passage. Upon meeting his sisters they rejoiced and while the boat was plowing northward to Nauvoo, they sang the songs of Zion and bore testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel. There was a bitter feeling against Mormonism at that time and some of the male members warned Richard to be silent as far as Mormonism was concerned. Quite a heated argument resulted that night when Richard went to measure the depth of the water which was one of his duties on the boat, he was pushed overboard. The sisters were so frightened and confused they dared not make any effort at investigation for fear their lives would be taken also.

They continued on to Nauvoo where they broke the ~~news~~^{news} to his wife. She was left a widow with three children, the youngest being a ~~boy~~^{boy} of four months.

The one sister Alice later married Apostle William Clayton, and the other sister Betty married John Morgan.

The family remained in Nauvoo the following two years. They were stormy years, full of sorrow and persecution for the Saints. After the Martyrdom of the Prophet, the Saints were left at liberty for while to build, cultivate, buy and sell but their days of peace were few. Persecution broke out anew. Mobs pillaged farms, ruined homes, burned grain fields and destroyed garden and orchards.

Their livestock was driven off. Lehi Nephi related that at one time the mob drove off what stock they had leaving but one blind mare. The violence became so acute that government officials informed Brigham Young that the people must depart from Nauvoo at once.

Brigham Young appealed first to the state, then to the nation for justice, but they were denied any protection and were left to the mercy of the mobs. The mobs had no mercy and even though it was mid winter, the people were told they must go. It was in February 1846 that the first companies were led by Brigham Young across the ice on the Mississippi to the opposite bank. They were leaving for the unknown solitudes of the west. Their leader was praying about the place where God would have his people go. Margaret Hardman with her little family participated in the exodus from Nauvoo. Instead of coming directly west with the immigrants they went down into Missouri, where they remained until a few years later, Here she met a man by the name of William Prestley, He being a widower and of the same faith as

she, there advised to marry. They put their household effects together and began preparing for the westward trek across the plains to Utah. Leaving Missouri they traveled north in to the state of Iowa and thence westward along the same trail of those who had gone before. While at Pottawatomie, Iowa another child was born, As they continued on the journey, and just a short time after the birth of this child, William Prestly became ill and died, He was buried on the prairie near winter quarters Nebraska.

Margaret Hardman left a widow for the second time and having four children, their names. Lehi Nephi, Alice Eliza, Richard Hrdman III, and Jane amanda Prestley.

Lehi Nephi, then 12 years old had to become the man of the family, and he drove the ox team the rest of the way into Salt Lake Valley arriving in 1853 with the Ethn Blurbank Co..

After their arrival they located in the north west part of Salt Lake City, about one mile north of the fair-grounds on the west bank of the Jordan River.

On the opposite side of the river lived Abraham Coon, who had arrived with his family three years before. He had built a comfortable home and owned a large farm. He had also taken up a large tract of land out at West Mountain now known as the Oquirrh range about 18 miles west of Salt Lake City. This land included the territory where Hercules Powder Co. is now located, also north for a considerable distance, and back to the foothills on the west. One of the first moves was to open the canyon which from that day has been known as Coons Canyon.; From this point many loads of wood have been freighted across the valley to Salt Lake city.

Wilford Woodruff also homesteaded a large tract of land adjoining that of Abraham Coon. There were no other settlers out there at that early date, as they stayed close to the city for protection from the Indians.

Lehi Nephi was his mother's sole support having the responsibilities of a man thrust upon his shoulders.

In those days there were no matches, and no coal, so it was necessary to bank the wood coals with ashes in such a way as to hold the fire during the night. One cold frosty morning Lehi Nephi awoke to find there were no living coals in the ashes. When the fire was gone they had to borrow fire, Their nearest neighbors were the Coons. In order to reach them, one had to go up the river a mile to the bridge then down the river a mile, on the opposite side.

Lehi Nephi took a skillet in which to carry the coals, half clad, half chilled he walked the two miles, barefoot over the frozen ground, as he had no shoes, On his arrival Mrs. Coon was deeply touched and took him in and warmed and fed him learned his errand and also about himself and family. She called her own children to see this barefoot boy, half frozen who had come so far, in the bitter cold that he might get fire to cook breakfast, and warm the rest of his family who were depending on him.

Down the ladder came boys and girls out of the attic where they slept. My great great grandmother, who was a child about 9 years with her brothers and sister stood face to face in her night gown with long black hair hanging over her shoulders, her dark eyes dancing as they met with Lehi Nephi for the first time. The gaze was that of his future husband.

Perhaps he knew and she knew why they had to cross the plains and rivers and mountains, and go in to the desert place.

At the end was more than a pot of gold. The two families became as the oak and vine. They were inseparable, Abraham Coon became as a father to Lehi Nephi Hardman.

During the time that Lehi Nephi lived down on the Jordan, he had an experience which he often related as a effect of prayer. His oxen had strayed away during the night. He walked barefoot for miles, over prairie, foothills and his feet were bleeding and sore. It seemed impossible to find them, so he decided

to pray. Kneeling upon the ground he asked the Lord for help. Arising to his feet he continued but a short distance, when upon the ground in front of him, what should he see but a pair of shoes placed side by side. He could hardly believe his eyes. Picking up the shoes he put them on. They appeared to be new ones and what surprised him more, they were just the right fit. He continued his search and finally found the oxen lying behind a knoll in the foothills. He returned home rejoicing.

In 1853 the same year, that Lehi Nephi came here, he and Abraham Coon located a stock ranch in the mouth of Coons canyon in the west mountains. They also built a saw mill some distance up the canyon at the place called the forks. At that place the canyon divided, making two canyons, right fork and left fork. The dam which provided the water for the mill is plainly seen today.

Wood was freighted across the valley. Lehi Nephi hauled tan-bark, also cut and hauled wood. At times he herded government horses and mules, in these hills.

Lehi Nephi had many experiences with Indians. Some of which have been published. There was a certain Indian that roamed the hills, he would come around occasionally and was considered to be a very bad Indian by the men working in the canyon, and those riding the Oquirrh range. They called him Bush Head, and their reason for fearing was that he boasted of having a big string of white mens scalps. One day Lehi Nephi was all alone in Coons canyon (15 years old) chopping wood when suddenly he heard a crackling of the brush. Looking up he saw old Bush Head. The Indian came out of the brush when he sensed the boy was alone and sat down. He would doze and seemed worn out. Occasionally he would give a grunt. Lehi did not load the wood but yoked the oxen to the running gear. At the time having a prayer in his heart that he would be able to escape from the treacherous creature. But when he jumped on the front of the running gear, Bush head jumped on the back, they rode down the canyon for some distance when the Indian demanded him to stop. The oxen were halted while the Indian got off and walked to the spring some distance away, and as he lay flat on his stomach to drink Lehi leaped to the back of one of the oxen, he shouted to them and lashed first one and then the other never looking back. I imagine he felt as Lot did when he was fleeing from destruction.

He had worked in cooperation with Abraham Coon for seven years, and at the end of that time at 19 he married his daughter Frances Ann Coon. they were married June 16, 1860.

Her father had given them two lots located where the Jackson School now stands. at seventh west and second north. They traded these lots for a wagon and a yoke of oxen. They filled the wagon with provisions and belongings and left Salt Lake City for Coalville. Summit County. Their intentions were to homestead land which they did. After 3 years they moved to Huntsville where they worked hard and learned to love their home and friends and neighbors and often made mention of them. Some of them were Grandma Smith, the mid wife, Captan Hunt, The Mackays, and the Slaters. At Huntsville Lehi was a minute man in the duty of defense of the community. He and his wife were able to understand the Indian language. They believed it was better to feed them than to fight them.

Early one morning when Lehi went out to do his chores he noticed an Indian standing in the corner by the large fire place chimney. It was a very cold winter morning and the Indian stood so still that he appeared to be frozen. Lehi went over to him and spoke but he did not move. Then taking the Indian by the arm shook him. Finding that he was alive he was taken into the house given a chair by the fire while Francis fixed something to eat. After eating the only way he showed his appreciation was by a grunt. Then he left. Several years later he showed his appreciation. A good deed done for an Indian is never forgotten.

Years passed and Lehi was in Huntsville canyon getting wood, His six year old boy George, was with him. He had been cutting wood for some time when suddenly out of the mountain stillness he heard a weird cry. In a short time the cry became louder and more distinct. He soon recognized it to be the whoop of warring Indians. The sounds came closer and closer, he knew that their lives were in danger. He told his boy to go up the side of a little hill and hide behind the large rocks, and to stay there until his mother came for him. Nearer came the Indians and soon one Indian, his face painted hideously rode up on

his pony. He brought the horses head right against Lehi as though to run him over. One after the other the indians came along side. It seemed the whole canyon was filled with indians, he was encircled by these creatures. There was silence for several minutes which seemed to be hours. He could not understand why the silence and waited. Finally one last indian rode up bringing his pony even with the rest. There was still silence for a few short minutes then the indian that had just arrived uttered some low tone syllables, Lehi looked up and saw that it was the same indian they had befriended on that cold winter morning some years before. The others immediately dispersed, turning their horses down the canyon.

One time during the night some indians came rushing into their home told him to get out of bed, but did not explain what they wanted. They hurried away with him in his night shirt, not giving him time to dress. His wife was sure that she would never see him again. Upon reaching the indian camp he found they had trouble among themselves, and wanted him to make peace. He was then permitted to return home.

Lehi Nephi was ill with rheumatic fever, due to exposure to the cold while freight ing wood from Huntsville, It was necessary for him to have special care. so he was brought to his father in laws home. After he recovered his health the moved out near the Oquirrh mountains. Here he built an adobe house which later was replaced by a five room brick house, with clothes closets and pantry. Also a frame summer kitchen. Their home was headquarters for the men who had herds of caattle grazing in the Oquirrh mountains. It was some times necessary for them to ride the range day and night to protect their hers for the cattle rustlers who would oftern make a raid. Lehi Nephi Hardman was ordained a High Priest on September 7 1878. by Daniel H Wells and was set apart as presiding High Priest over the Pleasant Green Branch, in which capacity he served for four years. In 1882 the Pleasant Green ward was organized and Lehi Nephi Hardman was first bishop of the ward. He served ten years, making a total of fourteen years service in the church. The ward at that time covered a large territory including Baaacchus, Magna, Garfield and the Salt Lake Air branc. This was a large area to vocer and he made his visits and roade to his meeting summer or winter, in a horse and buggy.

There were many thing to be admired in the character of Lehi Nephi, among these wass his thrift and endless ambition to work and achieve both spiritually and tempoally. For him there was never an idle moment for the time the first rays of light appeared int eh maountain, till it was too dark in the evening to see. As well as being thrifty and industrious he was systematic in everyting. What ever he did was done exceptionally well. His motto was Everything in it's place and a place for everything.

His hobby in later life was to grow beautiful flowers, which he gave away. His home and surroundings were admired by everyone. He truly did his share in making the desert blossom like a rose, and also spent countless hours in service of the lord. He had a host of friends and was affectionatly known as Uncle Le.