

The John Parker Family

This history of the John Parker family was taken from information recorded by Ella Winder Mackay and Alice Parker Isom in the histories they wrote. Ella is a granddaughter of John Parker Jr. and Alice Whitaker. Alice Isom is his daughter. Her mother was Ellen Briggs Douglas. A granddaughter of John and Maria Normington, Isabel Hilton Hinton recently sent me a copy of the history which was written by Alice Isom. I am grateful to them for their efforts so that we may know the sacrifices and accomplishments of our great grandfather John Parker Jr. and those associated with him in helping to build up this great western empire. These good people made it possible for us to be here, to enjoy the great blessings that are ours - especially those which come through obedience to the gospel. Let us show our appreciation for all these great possibilities and blessings. Mary W. Johnson

Richard Parker, great grandfather of Elizabeth Parker Winder was born about 1752. His wife, Alice Eastem (or Easten) was born about 1754. They were the parents of six children-William, born about 1774; Jan Samuel, born 17 August 1775; Nancy, born about 1778; Ellen, born about 1780; Alice, born about 1782; Robert, born about 1784.

John Samuel Parker married Ellen Heskin. They were the parents of ten children. Isabella, born 10 April 1798; Robert, born 6 December 1801; Richard, born 28 December 1803; Robert, born about 1805; Nancy, born about 1808; John, born 14 February 1812; William, born 1 July 1814; Ellen, born 7 July 1816; Alice, born 16 April 1819; Mary, born 8 September 1823. John Parker Jr. was born in the same house as his father, in Chagley Lane, Lancashire, England.

The Parker family was very religious. Most of them belonged to the Church of England. The children were all taught to pray and were strict observers of the Sabbath.

John Parker Jr. had little opportunity to attend school but he learned to read and write in his childhood. During his youth and early manhood he farmed and tended some cattle and sheep, just what they could raise on a farm which they rented. He made brooms which were used to sweep streets and stables. They were made of small willows called besoms. The Parkers were honest, industrious and thrifty but could not own their land and home. Few people did, for in England the land was owned by the rich.

They had a fly-shuttle loom in their home. Lancashire was a cotton manufacturing district. Many people who could not leave home to work in the factory, would weave in the home. The children had to help earn the living. John Jr. said that when his sister Mary was six years old, he had to wake her at three o'clock in the morning, to go to work in the factory.

John Jr. married Alice Whittaker of Ribchester, Lancashire, England in 1834.

Mr. Richards was pastor of the church they attended. John was the choir leader and often played his violin in church. The first Latter Day Saint missionaries went to the

community in 1837 and stayed at the home of John Parker Sr. The pastor, thinking to give his people a change, invited the missionaries to speak in the church. So many of his congregation were converted and joined the L.D.S. Church that he would not permit the Elders to preach there again. John; Parker Sr. and wife, Ellen Heskin, John Parker Jr. and wife, Alice Whittaker, Roger, Ellen, Alice, and, Mary Parker were baptized by Heber C. Kimball in March 1838; also William and Edward Corbridge who had married Ellen and Alice Parker.

John Parker Sr. said that he and a friend had gone to watch the baptism. It was a cold frosty night. After watching for awhile, they wished they had brought their clothes so they could be baptized. The young man said, "We can borrow Mag's dress", which they did. John said that getting into the dress was worse than getting into the icy water.

John Parker Sr. and his wife left to go to Nauvoo on the first ship chartered for the Latter Day Saints. They had never been twenty miles from home. It took faith and courage for them to leave family and friends. None of their children came at that time. Their daughter Mary later joined them in Nauvoo and the following year she married Samuel W. Richards.

John Parker Jr. and his wife Alice were the parents of six children, three of whom were born dead. She died when the last one was born, July 1843- It was a great sorrow to her husband to have her leave him in that way. The three children left were, William, aged 7-1/2 years, Elizabeth 6 years, and Mary Ann 4 years. His sister, Alice Corbridge did what she could- for the family while they remained in England.

John had suffered with asthma from the time he was twelve years old. One time when he was having a bad spell, Brother Heber C. Kimball was there, when on his second mission. John asked him to administer to him. Brother Kimball said, "Brother John, if you will not drink anymore tea or coffee, you will be healed." He did not touch John nor vocally pray for him but John was healed. Several years later, soon after the death of his wife, he was visiting at the home of his sister Alice. She had some coffee and forgetting for the moment the, promise made to him, he drank a cup of it and the asthma started again. He suffered with it most of the remainder of his life.

He sailed for America January 17, 1845 on the ship Palmyra, taking his three little ones without anyone to help him care for them. They were on the ship nine weeks. He was seasick and it was several weeks before he could care for the children and comb their hair. Elizabeth had beautiful hair but it was snarled and in bad condition. He did not know what to do so had it cut off. It made her look and feel so badly that the president of the company, Amos Fielding, rebuked him severely for cutting it.

It took all of his money to emigrate to Nauvoo. They arrived there safely. His mother assisted him in caring for his children.

In June of that year he became ill with chills and fever (ague) . He chilled every day for thirteen months and was greatly reduced in strength. His mother died of chills, 22 September 1845 leaving him without help with his three motherless children and his elderly father who was very feeble.

They would have suffered more had it not been for Mrs. Ellen Douglas who was very attentive when she could leave her own family. She was a widow with seven children.

John Parker Jr. married Ellen Briggs Douglas in 1846. Every member of both families who was old enough, worked. Quoting from Alice Isom their daughter: "John got a job, learned his job and in his own quiet way he was honest, kind and ready to assist the needy and sick wherever he could. His wishes were always held up to us as something that we must obey, so peace and love characterized our home."

They moved to St. Louis. They did not have the necessary money to emigrate with the Saints when the first company was leaving for the Rocky Mountains. The day after they left for St. Louis, the house in which they had been living in Nauvoo, was riddled with bullets, by the mob.

In St. Louis, provisions were very cheap and the people were very kind. They could buy a large cheese for \$1.

John Jr. worked in a soda water factory for seventy-five cents a day. When he had learned the business, he and John Carns went into business together, manufacturing and selling root beer, soda water etc. They were prosperous beyond their expectations; they employed over a hundred men in the summer time.

Two children were born to John Parker Jr. and his wife Ellen in St. Louis. Alice (Isom) was born 18 January 1848 and John Samuel 1 November 1851.

Three of Ellen Douglas Parker's children by her former marriage, were married. Richard married Elizabeth Wadsworth, and Ann married Edwin Robbins, 27 February 1848. Isabella Douglas married John Pincock a year later. They were all members of the Church. They worked in the soda water factory.

John's sister Alice and her husband Corbridge went to St. Louis in 1850. They buried two children in a week while there.

Ellen Parker and her husband, William Corbridge went to St. Louis in 1852. The night before they reached New Orleans, they lost their little daughter, Margaret. They never knew what became of her, whether she had been kidnapped or whether she had fallen overboard.

After six years of working and saving in St. Louis, John sold his business and prepared to go to the valleys of the Rocky Mountains. His wife sewed the lining of his and Richard's vests full of twenty dollar gold pieces and put another lining over them. They bought eleven wagons, two yoke of oxen or cows for each wagon, stoves, a threshing machine, and a complete outfit to take to the valley. They had one "spring" carriage with projection boards on the sides so that a bed could be made across. This was drawn by two large horses. John Jr. his wife Ellen, their two small children and John Sr. rode in this carriage. The other wagons were occupied by the other children and by Ellen's married children, also by Edwin and William Corbridge and their families. Their group traveled together, an independent company. The only one in the company who was not a relative was a teamster, a Catholic, who was on his way to California, in search of gold. They crossed the plains without an accident and often spoke of it as a pleasure trip. The cows furnished milk and butter, as well as taking their place in the teams. The extra milk was strained into a kit in the morning and the jolting of the wagon, churned the butter.

They arrived in the Salt Lake Valley 28 August 1852. John Jr. bought a lot from his brother-in-law Samuel Richards, on Second South between Main Street and West Temple and built a two room adobe house. The house was forty by twenty feet and had a lumber roof.

The pioneers liked to dance and not having public halls, they danced in the homes. After the Parker home was built, they often danced there. It was large enough to dance without moving the things out. William played the violin for these entertainments.

On the 4 -October 185 2 John Samuel died. He was eleven months old. He was buried on the home lot. Several years later, the body was moved to the city cemetery.

The threshing machine was probably the first one ever brought to Utah. It was an eight horse power, it was called a chaff piler. It separated the chaff from the straw and had to be followed by a' fanning mill, turned by hand to separate the grain from the chaff. They threshed and cleaned 13,000 bushels of grain before Christmas which gave them 1,300 bushels for themselves. A few years later they had the thresher made into a separator. It was not then necessary to use the fan mill.

In those days, the people had no, good molasses, only that which was hauled for a thousand miles by ox team. People made syrup or molasses from fruit, squash, beets, cornstalks or anything that would yield a little sweetening. Some of them had honey.

They did not have soda so John Jr. went to some alkali beds and gathered a quantity of saleratus. This was used in cooking. He went to Salt Lake and gathered salt from the shore. They ground this into fine salt in a coffee mill. Ashes were used for lye to make soap. In the autumn they went into the canyons to gather wild berries which they dried for use in winter.

In 1853 John Jr. built a saw-mill in a canyon northeast of Bountiful. They made shingles and lumber. They also had a paper mill where they made paper, wrapping paper and paste board. James Jepson was his partner in this work. They sold out their business in two years and John bought a farm from Orson Hyde "over Jordon". It is said that this was the only debt he ever had in his life. It took a wagon load of wheat to pay the interest on it.

John Jr. loaned William Jennings the money to buy the first steer he killed when he started in the butcher business. He also sold him a piece of land across his lot, where Mr. Jennings built a tannery. Mr. Jennings later became very wealthy-some say he was a millionaire.

Maria Jackson Normington joined the Church in Burnley, Lancaster, England, and with her husband and five children, two boys and three girls, emigrated to America and started their journey to the Rocky Mountains. They were crossing the plains in the Edward Martin handcart company which started from Iowa about August 1, 1856. The early snows hindered their travel and caused extreme suffering from cold and hunger. Many of that company died and were buried on the plains. Among those who died were Thomas Normington and his two sons. One of the little boys cried for bread and some one gave him a piece. He died with it between his teeth. Hannah, the youngest girl took it from his mouth and ate it. The surviving members of the company were nearly starved and frozen when the relief company from Salt Lake Valley reached them. William

Parker, John Jr.'s son was one of those who went to the rescue of these poor people. These emigrants were taken to the homes of the people here in the valley. Maria was taken first to the home of Brother Empey. Later she was moved to the Parker home. She was very sick for a year. John Jr. married her in 1857.

On the 24th July 1857, the pioneers of Salt Lake City and nearby settlements were celebrating the day at Silver Lake which is at the head of Big Cottonwood canyon. It was a wonderful event. People went with ox teams, horses, and any vehicle available. There were several bands, good music for dancing. In the height of the celebration, word came that Johnston's army was starting across the plains to invade the Mormon Territory.

The festivities went on as though nothing had happened. The next morning they left this Place of joyous festivities, to face and solve the problems the message had presented to them.

Preparations were soon made to prevent Johnston's army from coming into the valley. Many of the men were on guard all the next winter. In May 1858, the citizens living north of Utah county abandoned their homes and moved south, leaving their homes to be burned if the Army attempted to take possession of them.

The relatives of John Parker all went to his farm "over Jordon" and together they moved farther south and camped on the Jordon, west of Lehi. They were there about three weeks -When word came for them to return to their homes. The army had been allowed to pass through the apparently deserted city and were camped about two miles west of the Parker farm. They stayed there a short time then moved to camp Floyd.

Before they had left their homes, John made lumber boxes and filled them with flour and buried them. They didn't know if they would ever see their home again, and they did not want to leave the flour for the enemy. When they returned, their crops were growing so they sold their surplus supplies to the soldiers. Members of the family were nearly destitute for clothes.

John Parker Jr. often remarked that the soldiers not only brought the goods but the money with which to buy them. While the soldiers were camped near the Jordon, they went to the Parker farm and bought eggs, chickens, and milk. John made soda water and sold it to the soldiers at camp Floyd. He made about three hundred dollars in this way. What the enemy had intended for their destruction, proved to be a blessing in disguise.

John had made a barrel of lemon syrup at the cost of fifty dollars and started with it to sell it at camp Floyd. When going around the mountain, the wagon tipped over, the head of the barrel came out and spilled all the syrup. He returned home, made another barrel of syrup and arrived safely at the soldier camp and sold it, making \$30.00 from the sale.

He bought some sheep and the family began to spin and weave their own clothes. Aunt Maria lived on the farm, but she always went to the city home on Saturday evening so she could attend services at the Tabernacle on Sunday. John and Maria had two children, Richard, born 21 January 1859, and Maria (Hilton) 19 May 1,865.

John Parker Sr. died 8 January 1858.

Each winter, John and his wife Ellen went to Ogden to visit their children who lived there. In the winter of 1861, they took their weaving looms with them. They had a wagon, bed on a bobsled and traveled to Ogden in that way. They had sent word ahead for them to have their yarn dyed and ready and they would do their weaving for them. All of them lived in small houses and did not have much room for looms but they managed to weave a great many yards of cloth. They could not dye yarn as they do now, in a few hours. Blue took ten days to color. It had to be wrung out of indigo every morning and put to dry. Yellow was colored with peach leaves and alum. Blue was put in yellow dye to make green. Red was made with "maddow" (madder) soaked in "oran" (probably orchil) water and set with lye made of ashes. For brown they used "maddow" (madder) dye set with coppras. They used logwood set with coppras or vitral for black.

John Parker was called to go to Dixie to raise cotton. This call came 6 October 1862. His wife, Ellen and daughter, Alice decided that they would go with him and get a home ready before his other wife, Maria and the small children went there. John, Ellen and Alice arrived in Dixie 12 December 1862. They camped by an old cellar that somebody had "rocked up" and it had caved in. John cleared that out and built it up again. He had brought two window sashes and six panes of glass. He hued out cottonwood poles for frames. The roof was made with cottonwood poles covered with dirt. The floor was made of flat rocks. They took cottonwood poles and sewed a linsey blanket over it for a door. They did not get the house finished until spring, but the family lived comfortably outdoors, as the winter was so mild. The pioneers of this part of "Dixie" named their community, Virgin. It is built by the Virgin River about twenty-eight miles from St. George.

John took up a tract of land on North Creek. He dug an irrigation ditch and planted a crop. He bought a city lot and set out an orchard.

In the spring of 1863 the people of Virgin were called upon to send out five wagons, two yoke of oxen for each wagon and also a teamster for each wagon and provisions to go to Florence, Nebraska to help the Saints emigrate to Utah. John furnished supplies and gave enough money to the perpetual emigration fund to emigrate one soul from England. He had the privilege of saying who it would be. This person in turn was to pay the money back to the emigration fund. He sent for Elder Parkinson. He lived near the Parkers the rest of his life.

In the autumn of 1863 John, Ellen and Alice went to Salt Lake. He took his wife Maria and her family back with him. Ellen and Alice remained in the city. Ellen had a second story built on the home on Second South and when it was finished "it rented for \$100.00 a month in green back and \$50. 00 in gold". In 1864, John bought another lot with a dugout on it in Virgin. He took his wife, Ellen and daughter, Alice to live in it.

John was always busy, working very hard on roads and water ditches and taking care of his farm.

In 1865-1866, the Indians became very troublesome, driving off stock and killing a few white people. It was necessary to guard the town and finally they built a fort. John's house and dugout were inside the fort. Maria moved into the dugout. As soon as it was safe to move out of the fort John bought another lot with a good log house, built an adobe room on and made a comfortable home for Maria.

He repaired the thresher and took it to Virgin. It was the first one in that part of the country. He purchased the first mower there. He also bought a molasses mill.

On 13 May 1868, John was set apart as first Bishop of Virgin ward, George Isom was ward clerk; John's wife, Ellen was Relief Society President and daughter, Alice was secretary. George Isom and Alice were married June 1869 by Brother Joseph F. Smith, in the Endowment House.

While in Salt Lake at that time, John and George purchased "goods" for a co-op store, and took them to Virgin in the two wagons. This was the first store in the river settlements. They boarded up the back porch of their home, put in shelves and a counter and opened up the store. They sold one hundred dollars worth of "goods" the first day. Business increased. They enlarged the space for the store in the home. Later, a building was built for the store and it was moved from the home.

John sold the home in Salt Lake for \$3500. It was sold for one hundred thousand dollars about two years later.

He purchased a flour mill which was not profitable and kept it running for the benefit of the people of Virgin who were dependent upon it to grind their grain into flour.

In 1874 Brigham Young went to Virgin to organize a branch of the United Order. John was president and George Isom was vice president and secretary. Most of the wards joined and worked in it for two years, then decided to give it up because the people did not seem prepared for it.

The St. George Temple was dedicated April 6, 1877. John and his children went there to do the work for all his ancestors he could remember and for whom he could obtain records.

Although, in his later years John's health began to fail, he could still study and give advice for "the good of his ward." His counselors took charge of the Sabbath meetings for years. In 1879 he gave up the management of the store. At that time it was moved away from the home to another building. John was still president; George Isom was secretary and manager. George was first counselor in the Bishopric and was ward clerk. After John became ill and feeble, George visited him each day and took care of any business he wanted done.

It was a great sorrow to John when George died, 6 December 1885 at the age of thirty-nine. When the President of the Stake came to George's funeral, John asked to be released as Bishop. He felt that he could not continue without George's help. However he was not released until his death, 21 March 1886. He was 74 years old.

He was Bishop of the Virgin Ward eighteen years and served faithfully. Elder Erastus Snow who was an apostle, told the people they could not realize how they were blessed in having a Bishop so wise in council and always studying for their Welfare. He was a humble, quiet man, full of love and sympathy; a patient sufferer, trying always to ease the burden of those who waited on him during his illness. Those who knew him, loved him very much. His wife Ellen wanted to live to take care of him until the last. She died 24, February, 1888. His wife Maria, had died 19 March 1881. Richard Parker, son of

John Jr. and Maria was married to Betsey Burke 28 January 1880. Their daughter, Maria was married to John W. Hilton, I June 1881.

The following quotation is Alice Isom's message to each of us - " I wish to say to their descendents, that we have much to be thankful for-that we were born of such parents who taught us by example and precepts, to be honest and live according to the principles of the gospel."