

LIFE HISTORY OF CHARLES WILKINS, JR.

Charles Wilkins, Jr. was born 28 December 1827 in Bucklebury, Berkshire, England, the son of Charles Wilkins and Jane Rixon. He and his brother John were baptized into the LDS church in September 1849. In 1855, May or June, his mother, father, sister Elizabeth, and perhaps other members of the family became members of the church.

The Wilkins family lived on a farm, the nearest town being Newby. As a young man Charles worked for a man who grew reeds to be made into baskets. Late in 1850 he married Elizabeth, daughter of James Drinkwater who was born 16 January 1831.

On Wednesday, January 8, 1851 Charles and Elizabeth sailed on board the sailing vessel "Ellen". On the ship's register Charles' age is given as twenty- two and Elizabeth's nineteen, his occupation as laborer. There were 466 saints on board under the direction of James W. Cummings. All went on board on January 6, but the ship remained anchored in the river opposite Liverpool until about eleven o'clock that night when she struck a schooner breaking her jibbom and main and foreyards. The following day they put into Cardigan Bay, New Wales to repair. The wind changed the day the vessel put into port. They remained in port three weeks. The accident proved to be a blessing because impatient so they set sail January 23. The wind changed soon on February 1st they lost sight of the Irish coast.

Nearly every child on board had measles, also some adults. There were ten deaths (two adults) during the voyage, six marriages and one birth. The deaths were due to a cough similar to whooping cough.

The saints were divided into twelve wards (10 berths) to each with president for each, and then each ward was divided into two groups. A president over the priesthood was also organized. Men were appointed to visit every family twice a day and to administer to the sick.

After much bad weather and strong head winds the ship docked at New Orleans on March 14. There the company chartered the steamer "Alexander Scott" to take the emigrants to St. Louis, Missouri. They paid \$2.50 for each adult and half price for children, all luggage included. They left New Orleans the morning of the 19th and landed in St. Louis March the 26th. Two children died coming up the river and one was born.

Charles and Elizabeth settled in Illinois where Charles worked for a farmer named Atwood to earn money for equipment to come to Utah. On 9 May 1852 their daughter, Lillian was born at Madison, Illinois. Two years later, 1854, the little family started for Utah. They had an ox team and lynchpin wagon. They saw many large herds of buffalo. Some of the company would be sent to kill some to furnish meat for the travelers.

Many of the company died of cholera. A man whose wagon was near the end of the train and who was a dear friend of the Wilkin's became ill and died. Elizabeth insisted on going to see him before he was buried much against the wishes of her husband. She was well at the time but soon became ill and told her husband she was going to die. When she died no one would come near so Charles wrapped her body in sheets and blankets and carried her out of the wagon to a grave the other men had dug. A straw tick was laid in the grave and her body was placed on it and covered over.

A family named Welch, from Pilsdon and Marshwood Dorsetshire took care of baby Lillian during the rest of the journey. This family had also joined the church in 1849. On September 4, 1850 they had sailed from Liverpool on board the ship "North America" with 357 saints under the presidency of David Sudworth and Hamilton G. Park. The family was listed as follows: Job Welch, 40, carpenter; Charlotte Welch, 47; Honor, 20; Uriah, 8; also Job's sister, Ann, 44. The ship docked at New Orleans November 1.



The Wilkins Home in South Cottonwood

About two years after reaching Utah, Charles married Uriah, or Ury as she was known, then age fourteen or fifteen. Charles had first lived in Malad, then in Willard and later in South Cottonwood where he settled, bought a farm and lived the remainder of his life. Their first child, Clarissa was born in Willard, their second, Ury Harriet in Mill Creek. The rest of their fifteen children were born in South Cottonwood, two of them dying in infancy.

The little home they lived in had only one room. The house had a willow fence as its base. Stakes were driven into the ground and willows were woven between them. Then mud was plastered to this willow fence. There was no stove in that house. The mother must keep her little family warm and fed with a large fireplace. Jesse was the last baby born in that house. The new house was a story and a half log house with two rooms upstairs and two down and a lean-to at the back. There was a stove in that house. For fear of famine, enough wheat was always kept to last from harvest to harvest. In the new house, too, was a bin that would hold a thousand pounds of flour.

Some of the family clothing was bought ready made. The mother and girls spun yarn and knitted the socks and stockings. They also made the shirts as well as their own clothing. Often they bought material by the bolt. Trousers for the little boys were made at home. The older boys and men dressed very much like our men do today.

In 1862 Charles' father and sister Elizabeth left their home in England to come to Utah but during the sea voyage the father died leaving Elizabeth to come alone the rest of the long journey. In August 1865 the mother wrote from Bucklebury, "If I had know how things would of turned out when Betsy and father went, I would have come along with them." Sometime between then and October 1873 when she had her own endowments at the Endowment House in Salt Lake she came to Zion. After the mother came, John came to Utah and also another brother, James; but James did not stay. None of the family knew whether he went to Australia as he had planned or just what did become of him. The mother made her home with her daughter and son and died at Charles' home 18 February 1877. Charles had sent the money to bring his father, mother and sister to Utah.

Besides farming Charles did considerable butchering. He killed beef steadily for two years to supply the Orson A. Woolley butcher shop in Murray, killing two or three animals a week. Another time he took a contract to furnish another man in beef for sometime. Charles was superintendent (manager) of the South Cottonwood cemetery for twenty years.

He also could make shoes, making some of his children's shoes. Jesse remembered one pair he made out of the uppers of an old pair of boots. They were handed down from one child to another. It seemed there was no wear out to them.

For many years Ury suffered a lameness and trouble with her kneecap. It is not known for sure how she injured it. One story was that while still a young woman the cow she was leading with a rope ran around her in such a way as to pull her kneecap out. She always had to take great care in walking or it would slip out and she would have to have someone put it back in place. She died 8 November 1891. Charles married again to Harriet Cox and had been married about four years when he died 12 March 1896.