

LIFE HISTORY OF ELIZABETH MEALMAKER BOYACK

By Ida Boyack Whiting (granddaughter) 1990



Elizabeth Mealmaker Boyack was born April 30, 1805 in Tealing, Forfarshire, Scotland.



She was the daughter of Peter Mealmaker and Janet Robertson Mealmaker. We know nothing of her childhood and girlhood, but she must have lived at this place all of her youth. It was here she met **James Boyack, Sr.** and they were **married at Mains Parish in 1827.** She was the mother of fourteen children, and had very little medical care for herself or for her children. James worked on the roads in that district and earned a little more than the average laborer. As he placed his weekly earnings in her hands, he often said, "Yours is the hardest part, to make this money go around for all of our needs."

She worked hard to raise her family, and to keep them well fed and clothed. They lived in one of many numerous cottages, on the outskirts of Dundee, Scotland. Their home life was very much like the family described in Robert Burns' poem, "The Cotter's Saturday Night." Everything in their home was plain but good. The children went to work young. Some worked in the mills, some on the large estates nearby, and one daughter clerked in a candy shop in Dundee. All of the mills shut down on Saturday at noon, so the family could be together Saturday evening and all day Sunday. Saturday afternoon was spent in cooking, and getting clothes ready for Sunday, as there was no work done in their home on the Sabbath.

Elizabeth and James and their family attended church services regularly at the Parish Church. Sometimes, the minister would come home with them for dinner, and the children had to be on their best behavior. The best of their dishes and tablecloths were used on these occasions.

A great sorrow came to the family, and especially to Elizabeth, when the two youngest children, Thomas and Jessie, were stricken with some dread disease and died. They were buried in the Parish Churchyard.

Elizabeth heard the Gospel preached by the missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and some of their friends had become members. Her husband, James, was converted and baptized, but still she hesitated to break away from the old beliefs and traditions. After much study and prayer, she finally decided to be baptized. Elder John Mather performed the ordinance, on Feb. 3, 1851. She was confirmed on Feb. 11, 1851, by Elder William Burton.

She

became just as devoted to the L.D.S. Church as she had been to the old one. She took her children to services regularly, and had them baptized and confirmed members as soon as they were old enough.

The teachings of the L.D.S. Church and its converts were not very popular in Scotland in those days, so the saints all had a strong desire to gather to Zion. Their **oldest son, James, Jr.** came to America and Utah in 1853, thinking to send for his father's family and his sweetheart later.



The task of earning ship's passage for their large family became too much for him. Good paying work was hard to get. The saints in Utah had only been there six years, and they traded work a lot. So James, Sr. decided to have James, Jr. accept the aid of the Church Perpetual Emigration Fund, and he and Elizabeth prepared to come to Utah. It is said that no people love their country more than do the Scots, so we can imagine that it was with some sorrow, as well as joy, that the family prepared to leave their native land. It was hard to leave their folks and friends. It was no small task, also, for Elizabeth and her grown girls to sort out what little they could take with them, and discard the rest.

At last, they were ready to leave. Elizabeth made a final trip to the churchyard where her babies were buried. It was with a sad heart that she knelt by those small graves for the last time.



Elizabeth, James, eleven children, and their son **James, Jr.'s fiancée, Margary Waterhouse**, left Scotland and went by boat to Liverpool, England. They stayed there several days while their ship was made ready, and other Saints gathered for the long trip across the ocean. All the people ate and slept in a large, empty warehouse near the docks. They would go up into town to get supplies, but spent most of their time near the docks. Of course the young folks and children did not mind, as it was all new and exciting for them.

At last, the day of sailing arrived! The big ship was loaded with five hundred passengers, and their luggage. The ship was the "Samuel Curling," with Capt. Israel Barlow in charge of the Saints. The record says that the trip was uneventful, but to the mother of a large family, no journey is uneventful. One day, one of the smaller sons slipped on the wet deck and was barely saved from going overboard by a sailor quickly grabbing him by his heels. The sailor gave him a sharp whack on his backside, and sent him below deck. Another time, during a calm spell, when there wasn't enough wind to sail the ship, the captain caught some large ocean catfish. What a welcome change in their diet! The women and girls had to do all the laundry aboard ship, and had to swear the sailors to secrecy many times because of clotheslines strung in any place they dared to put them. The ship reached New York City, May 27th, 1855. Everyone was glad to set foot on land again. The Saints went by railroad to Pittsburgh, Pa., and then by steamboat on the river to St. Louis, Mo. When they were transferring from one boat to another, Elizabeth, her daughters and small sons were left standing, while James and the two older sons pulled away in a loaded boat with all their luggage.

Elizabeth and the girls were upset and worried, but they were all reunited in St. Louis.

There was a delay of two weeks here. The Saints camped near the river and a cemetery. Many of them became ill from the impure water supply. They went by boat again from St. Louis to Atchison, Kansas. The outfitting station for the L.D.S. Emigration to go across the plains was Mormon Grove, which was near Atchison, Kansas. From this place, on August 4th, 1855, this fine family of Boyacks started across the plains, headed for the territory of Utah. They were in an ox-team train in the charge of Milo Andrus. There was quite a lot of sickness among the emigrants. Quite a few died and were buried along the trail. They also had quite a number of oxen die, and some of them were left along the way, being too weak to pull a load any further. Our Boyack Family had to walk almost all of the way across the plains, to save the oxen to pull the wagons with their clothes and supplies.

They reached Salt Lake City, October 4th, 1855. The family who arrived that day consisted of James Boyack, Sr., his wife Elizabeth Mealmaker Boyack, and the following children: Ann, Margret, Hannah, Elizabeth, Alexander, Mary, William M., Joseph G., Peter F., and the twins, David Doig and Robert M. Also with them was James, Jr.'s sweetheart, Margary Waterhouse. It was a happy day for them all to reach the long desired Zion, and to be



reunited with their oldest son and brother. It was a glorious day for him, too, after being alone here for two years, to have his family and sweetheart with him once more. They stayed in Salt Lake City for two weeks, and then moved south to a little village called Palmyra, which was about three miles northwest of Spanish Fork, Utah. **James, Jr., and his Margary were married in Springville, at Bishop Anderson's big home in November of 1855.**



There were five daughters in the family. All of them were married within about a year after their arrival. They married Scots men, some of them being old friends from their native land. At the wedding of one daughter, Mary, to John Robertson, Elizabeth baked a large "Johnny Cake" and served it for the wedding cake. They had had to really forage for food, and Elizabeth still had grown sons at home.

When the Palmyra Fort was abandoned in 1856, the Boyacks moved to the present site of Spanish Fork. Here they built a two-storied adobe house, on the corner of First West and Second (Forth?) North. James, Sr. did most of the work on the house, and also made most of their furniture. Elizabeth cooked in a fireplace, which also furnished the heat for the home. It proved to be quite a nice house for those days, and she was happy to have a home of her own. She enjoyed the comfort and security of her own fireside. She loved and enjoyed her own children and grandchildren.

She was a fine-looking lady, and very fussy about her appearance. She would wash her face in buttermilk every few days to keep her skin fair and smooth. She always wore a cap on her head, as was customary in her native land. Every small ruffle and bit of lace on her caps had to be ironed just so. We wondered how they heated irons until she got a real cast-iron stove. There were so many hardships to endure!

It was hard for Elizabeth to adjust to life in the west. Many Indians came to their pioneer home. Her children said it was quite amusing to hear their mother, with her Scottish dialect, trying to talk to an Indian, and the poor soul trying to understand, and talk to her in his language. She was a little afraid of the Indians, anyway, as most of the ladies were, but they knew they had to keep peace with them. The best way to do this was to feed them. They had to share what little they had with their Lamanite brothers. However, the Indians helped them cultivate corn, and fish in the Spanish Fork River and Utah Lake.

Two of Elizabeth's daughters and all of her sons, except Alexander, made their homes in Spanish Fork. As the daughters had married men from Scotland, so three of her sons married Scots girls, so they all got along fine. They all worried about Alexander. He did not find a wife early as the other boys did. He became dissatisfied and left home to find work. This grieved his parents sorely. He was gone for years, and they never heard from him. At last he returned with two big freight outfits and several teams of mules. He said he had been freighting in the Black Hills country, and had prospered quite well. After visiting with his folks for a while, he became restless again and left, with his teams and wagons and a hired driver. His folks never saw or heard from him again. It was such a heartache for them! They always worried and wondered what could have happened to him. Many of the family thought that he must have been killed.



Elizabeth and her **James, Sr.** worked hard in the Church in Spanish Fork, and also in the community. James was a willing Seventy and High Priest. He also worked on the town council. Elizabeth was Relief Society President for many years. She engineered the sewing of many clothes, quilts and rag-rugs. She was older when she came to America, anyway. She and her James had been sealed in the Endowment House on March 8th, 1862.



When they were left alone, their children and grandchildren visited them often, and cared for them in every way. The older grandchildren said they would almost quarrel among themselves to decide whose turn it was to go and help Grandma. They all wanted to. When they were not able to care for themselves, they rented their house, and moved into a room of their daughter, Mary Robertson's home. Here Elizabeth died on December 14th, 1886. She was buried in the Spanish Fork Cemetery. James died two years later. The family placed a marker over both their parents' graves. This marker expresses the sentiment of all their family in these words: "We Miss You Most, Who Loved You Best."