

THE HISTORY OF JAMES THOMAS TAYLOR

Written by Clara Ruth Taylor Bronson

James Thomas Taylor was born June 28, 1844 at West End, Hampshire, England. The eldest son in a family of five; four boys and one girl. They were allowed just a certain amount of food to eat which wasn't enough to keep them from being hungry all the time. James fared better than his brothers and sister, as he had to herd their cow along a lane that had horse chestnuts on it and he ate those.

His father was a shoe maker by trade and he taught his trade to James, which he used later on in his life. This enabled him to make shoes for his children while other children, whose fathers couldn't make shoes, had to go barefoot.

The Mormon missionaries came to this part of England and the Taylor family became converts to the church. They came over to Salt Lake City, Utah in 1859.

James became a hired man for Brigham Young. He hauled granite rock to build the Salt Lake Temple. In the summer time he crossed the plains to bring the immigrants across. It took three months to make the round trip so he could make one trip a year.

The last trip he made he brought the Cottle family across. They were converts to the church. There he met Clara Cottle who became his wife soon after they arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah.

All the property he owned was an ox team and a wagon. They settled on a farm in Bountiful, Utah. They were too poor to own an alarm clock so they had to depend on the cock crowing to tell the time. He had to get up and go after his oxen. After his day's work, he had to take them two miles to find feed and of course, walk the two miles in the morning to have them back to start his day's work by daylight.

After farming several years at Bountiful, he, with two other families, moved to Blue Creek, Utah, the first families there. They had wonderful soil, but not enough water to farm, so he decided to raise cattle. He had accumulated forty head. The winters were very severe so he had them in a shed for protection. One night, there was a terrible blizzard and he dreamed the shed drifted over and smothered all of them. When he awoke, he ran out there and discovered his dream was true. They all lay under the snow, dead.

He made a second try, but when he had accumulated twenty head of cattle, the same thing happened again. Blizzard, dream, and all smothered under the snow, so he gave up.

He went to the Raft River Valley in 1879 and there took up a homestead. The first farm in the town that became known as Almo, Idaho.

After trying to farm for several years, he found out he could produce wonderful crops. But it was to farm from a market so once again he turned to cattle. This time he was successful and made cattle his life work. His Ranch became the summer home for four of Brigham Young's grandsons. They were also James's nephews.

James was known throughout his life for his truthfulness and honesty. People said of him that his word was just as good as other men's bonds. His honesty was just the same.

One experience of his truthfulness was told with some embarrassment and amusement, too. In the early days they had to haul their grain up to a town called Ketchum to have it ground into flour for their

home use. They traveled by team and it took about a week round trip. This time James joined up with the Stake President and Bishop. When within some distance from Ketchum, some men told them the mill had refused to grind a Mormon's grain. They decided they would try anyway. The President and Bishop hurried ahead of James and when reaching the mill were asked if they were Mormons. Their answer was no. The miller said, "I am afraid you are. I will not grind your grain."

They hurried back and told James it was useless to go on as they wouldn't grind even if they thought they were Mormons. James said, "Well I have come this long way and I will not go back until I have tried." So he drove on to the mill and the first question was, are you a Mormon? James said, "Yes, I am a Mormon, what about it?" They replied, "Oh, nothing at all. We will grind your grain, as you are the first Mormon to bring his grain to be ground here."

On another occasion, it was a very severe winter. People were out of hay to feed their cattle, all but James who had plenty of hay. The price went up to \$20 a ton. James sent out word he had hay for sale at \$6 a ton. The Bishop rushed up to him and said, "Brother Taylor, I will take all the hay you have for sale." James said, "No you won't. I could get \$20 a ton if I wanted to take advantage of my fellow man. I can make a small profit on \$6 a ton. The hay must go to benefit all. Every man can have one ton and after this is gone, they can come for another ton." The Bishop made this topic his sermon in church and said, "I stand rebuked."

James was the president of the Almo Water Company and fought three heavy law suits with the Keogh Cattle Company. They had several ranches but claimed all the land and water for miles around for their cattle. They had no legal right to this land and water, so James fought one law suit with them over the land which he homesteaded and won that suit. Later, he won two suits over the water.

They always respected James and each fall they came and bought his calves. While buying and gathering the other farmer's calves, they stayed at James's home, there being no hotel in town.

He was also the Justice of the Peace for many years. He had a great many cases to settle. One of his cases was when his son wanted to marry a girl from Yost, Utah, a town twenty miles from Almo. It was January and to get a marriage license in Utah, the boy had to go to Brigham City, Utah, a week's journey in winter, or he could go to Albion, Idaho, a two days journey. But the girl lived in Yost, Utah. They couldn't marry in Utah with an Idaho license and neither could James marry them in Utah. The Utah and Idaho state line ran between Yost, Utah and Almo, Idaho. Her folks brought her across the Utah line and James met and married them standing out in the sage brush, in a terrible blizzard. After the ceremony, they all returned to Yost for the wedding reception.

After James became successful in the cattle business, he received word from England that he being the oldest son had inherited a fortune and for him to come back and claim it. But knowing he couldn't bring it out of England, and being satisfied where he was, he never went back to claim it.

James had his own blacksmith shop and did all of his repair work on his machinery. He also invented a number of things to make his work easier. But he never had any of them patented. One of his inventions was a trip used in loading and unloading hay. Someone had it patented and it was used extensively over the Burley and Twin Falls projects.

He did a lot of reading and had a large library consisting of a number of author's complete works, also law books and religious books which he spent his spare time studying. He also read "Josephus" from cover to cover every winter and could quote the Bible almost from memory.

He had an accident while chopping wood. A chip flew up and entered his eye. There were no doctors, but his wife, being a nurse, treated his eye and had him use a dark bandage over it for several months. After faith and prayer, his bandage was removed, and it was found that the pupil had enlarged so much it covered almost all of his eye. He had perfect vision in this eye for the remainder of his life.

As he advanced in years, his uninjured eye deteriorated so he had to have glasses, but not the injured one.

James had seven children, five boys and two girls. They were James T., George, Harry, Edward, Herman H. Taylor, Edith Louise Taylor Johnston, and Clara Ruth Taylor Bronson.

He died January 3, 1931 at Boise, Idaho.

As he lay in his casket, one of his lifelong friends said with the tears streaming down his face. "There lies an honest man."