

Thomas Davies (1854) and Mary Ann Cooper Reflections by their son Lorenzo Snow Davies

Father and mother were both born in Utah, father at Fillmore and mother at a little place a few miles south of Fillmore, called Meadow Creek. The Cooper home was in Fillmore but they were staying for a while at Meadow Creek.

Father was a typical Welchman, quick tempered, quite emotional, very religious, honest as the day is long, a beautiful singer and a very hard worker. He was lots of fun to be with unless you made him mad and then watch out. As the saying goes He would fight a buzz saw and give it two rounds head start. You could get anything from father if you played on his sympathy. I remember one time he gave a bum a quarter and I said to him, "Why did you give that fellow money, you know that he will just spend it for booze." Father replied, "Yes I guess he will, but I would sure feel bad if I found out that he was really hungry and I had refused to give him anything."

Another time I said to him, "Why do you pay that much tithing? You don't owe that much." He answered, "I figure out how much I owe and then I add a little to be sure that I have not made a mistake and forgotten something."

One time when I was just a boy I saw a lovely fancy saddle in the store window but it cost about one hundred dollars and that was a lot of money in those days. When we got home I said to father, "I sure wish I had a saddle like that." I had a good saddle but it wasn't a fancy one. Father just stuck his hand down in his pocket, pulled out his purse, took out a hundred dollars and said, "Go get your saddle if you want it." I got my saddle but I have always been a little bit ashamed because I knew how much we needed other things.

Mother was different. She never got angry or at least she never let her feelings show and never flew off the handle, but if she told you to do something you just as well do it because she never forgot that she had told you. I remember one time when I was a boy at Hillspring. Just a year or two after we moved there, we lived in the northwest corner of town and our house faced north on to the street, with an other street on the west of us. To avoid going out the north gate and then going west to the corner and then along the street west of the house, father built a gate in the west fence so we could go out the west door and right out onto the street. He didn't have any iron hinges so he used some leather to make hinges but they didn't last long and the top hinge broke. Mother told me to go fix the gate. For some reason I didn't want to do it just then so I let it go. A few days later, just as I was beginning to be ashamed of myself, mother reminded me that I hadn't fixed that gate. Her saying something about it made me mad because I knew I should have done it before, so I left it a while longer. A few days later she reminded me again. Every time I just about got ready to fix that blamed gate she would say some thing about it and so it did not get fixed. Finally one of the other kids got tired of seeing that gate hanging there by only the bottom hinge and got some tools and was going to fix the gate but mother stopped her and said "No, I told Lorenzo to do that." I don't remember if I ever did fix that gate. I'm sure I must have done, but I was out there a few years ago with Lloyd and some of his kids and so I had them stand by that gate which I should have fixed seventy years ago. It was still hanging by the bottom hinge.

Mother was a very good manager. She was always careful with her money and usually could come up with some cash if it was really needed but there had to be a very good reason for her to spend money or she wouldn't do it. Father made quite a lot of

money but any one could play on dad's sympathy and get what he wanted, so it was a good thing he had a careful wife. I told mother once that she was stingy but that was not the truth. If you needed it, you got it and she could usually dig it up so we were lucky to have such a mother. I love my mother very much. I'm sure we would have gone without many things if it hadn't been for her. When the crops were sold in the fall or when we sold some cattle, she would always have a list of the things that we needed and we would lay in a supply of food, clothing and other necessities. We never went without things we needed, thanks to mother.

Grandfather, Thomas Davies, was born in England (7 April 1812) and was christened at Upton Magna Church, in Shropshire, in 1812. His mother was Hannah Letitia (Letitia) Davies. Letitia was the daughter of William and Margaret Davies of the Rae Farm, a large farm a little north and east of Upton Magna. I believe they told me that it consisted of 376 acres of land.

Phyllis and I and a friend of ours, Sister Preece, were in Shrewsbury and went to visit the old farm. The people who lived there at that time were very nice to us but they did not know much about the history of the place. They took us through the house and showed us all over and told us that the Lady who owned the farm lived only a few miles away at a place called Summerland. We later visited her and she, also, was very nice to us. I believe she said that she owned 33000 Acres of land in that area and that the hamlets of Upton Magna and Ditherington belonged to her, as well as a lot of the farms in that area. She said that she could tell me who had paid the rent on the Rae farm as far back as 1530, and that she could tell how much rent was paid on any of the farms from there back to William the Conqueror but not who paid it. However, she didn't know the relationship of the different farmers, but usually the farms went from father to son. That corresponded quite well with the parish register. William Davies probably died about 1810 and his son-in-law a fellow named Humphrey, took over the farm. I don't know what became of Letitia's brother, John, but he didn't succeed his father at the Rae farm. This Humphrey would probably be a brother-in-law to Letitia.

I had a very interesting experience there at Upton Magna when I went over alone in 1976. Phyllis wasn't very well at that time and her heart seemed to bother her, so she didn't go. It wasn't safe to travel alone, but I got along all right.

One day when I was at Shrewsbury, I decided to go out to Upton Magna and see if I could find anything at the Church yard. While I was roaming around I noticed a headstone for a Mrs. Humphrey and was checking around this, when I noticed a fellow going along the street past the grave yard. He was eyeing me up pretty closely or so it seemed to me. Being alone, I was a little bit on the lookout and I saw him stop several times and look at me. When he got to the gate he stopped and I thought he was going to come in, but after hesitating for a moment he went on. He got almost to the corner of the street when he stopped again for a few minutes, turned around, walked back to the gate, turned into the Church yard and came over to where I was. The first thing he said was, "I see you are looking at old lady Humphrey's grave" I said "Yes I am." He said "Are you related to her?" I told him no, not as far as I knew. He said "It is too bad for you. If you were, you would sure be in the money". I said, "Is that so?" he said "Yes it is but those people down there are no better than I am. He seemed to have a chip on his shoulder so I said, "What do you know about the Humphreys?" He said "I'm not talking about the Humphreys, I mean those people there now, and they are no better than I am." I asked, "Do you know anything about the Rae farm?" He said, "I sure do. My mother was old Lady Humphrey's personal maid until she died, but these folks are no better than I am. This fellow only married the old lady for her money and they are no

better than I am, but the old lady was real class. I wanted to find out more but I had an appointment with the Church Warden and had to leave. I intended to hunt him up later but never got around to it, for which I am sorry.

Thomas Davies, my grandfather, had three sisters and one brother, Sara born 1815, Mary 1818, Maria 1821 and James 1827. Sara and James both died as babies. In the 1841 census, they were living in Bellstone Street and all three were classed as milliners. Their home was in Barker Street but their business was in Bellstone.

Letitia died the 12 of May 1866 and Maria died the next day, May 13, 1866. They were buried in the same grave in Meole Brace Cemetery, a suburb of Shrewsbury. Mary was later buried with them in the same grave in the year 1900.

Thomas (1812) became a shoemaker and dyer and in 1834 he married Mary Simonds, a daughter of John and Susan Simonds. She had one brother, Joseph, who was there when she died in 1849 at No. 4 Canal Buildings. Thomas and Mary were married in St. Mary's Church in Shrewsbury. They were living at #4 Canal Buildings when Thomas met the Mormon missionaries. In a very short time he joined the church but his wife refused to have anything to do with it and so they separated. There is an article in the Millennial Star, written by Elder T. D. Brown telling about their missionary success in Shrewsbury. Seven people joined the church in one week and an organizational meeting was held in No. 4 Canal Building, the home of Thomas Davies.

I do not think that they had any children. At any rate I have not been able to find any.

Thomas left England late in 1848 on the ship Sandor or Sandon and landed in New Orleans early in 1849 where he met Mary Ann Jones Jacaway Bates. After about a year, they were married. His first wife, Mary Simonds, died in England in 1849 of Asiatic Fever (what ever that is). Mary Ann Jones was widowed with three children at that time, Susannah, John Jacaway, and Nephi James Bates. She had had several other children but they had all died as children, probably from exposure due to the mobbing they had suffered with the saints in Missouri. Susannah married George Black.

Shortly after, they were married they came to Utah, arriving there in the fall of 1852. Susannah had already married and come the year before. Mary Ann Jones was the daughter of Richard Jones and Margaret Stevens.

Richard Jones was the son of Leonard Jones, who was probably a veteran of the Revolutionary War (I'm not sure of this but I think it is right). Richard fought in the war of 1812 and his discharge papers say he was born in Abbeville, South Carolina. Mary Ann Jones was born in Maury County, Tenn., 13 April 1817. The Church records list Fields B. Jacaway, Polly Ann Jacaway, Richard Jones, Margaret S. Jones and Margaret E. Jones as being members living in Nauvoo Ill. in 1842-1846.

When the Davies family arrived in Fillmore, they lived for some time in the old fort. The houses in the fort were built around the outside wall and there was a space between two houses which Grandfather used to make a place to live. Later when the Indians had become more friendly they bought a lot in town and built a house there and also bought a small farm on the outskirts of the town where they raised grain. I have a copy of the original title to that land. My father Thomas (1854) was born while they were living in the old fort. He was born the 21 October 1854.

I asked father one time if conditions were as bad when he was a boy as they are sometimes painted and he said 'yes in most circumstances but he said our family never really wanted for anything. Father was a shoemaker and also a tanner and dyer so he

could tan and make his own leather. His specialty was men's riding boots and he had lots of sales from the non-Mormon cowboys who would pay cash. He also made many pairs of shoes for the saint's whether they could pay for them or not.

One thing that father told me was that grandfather built a granary to hold the grain they raised on their little farm. He divided it into two bins and he would not use the grain in the one bin until the crop was threshed in the fall and the other bin was filled. He said he never knew both bins to be empty at the same time but once. That year the crops were very poor and so before spring came most people had eaten up all their grain and had nothing for seed in the spring. When the one bin was empty he refused to use the other one and they had to get by with what they could otherwise. Many people came and tried to buy this grain but grandfather wouldn't sell it. Some got quite angry. When spring came he went to the leaders of the church and told them they could have this grain for seed to be given out free to those who had no seed but that they were not eat it. So, many people had seed thanks to grandfather.

My father grew up, farming, working on the Church Ranch in Millard County. The ranch was called the Seventy One (71) Herd. Uncle George Croft was the manager for a long time. He cut timber in the mountains, worked at the saw mills, and many other things.

In the spring of 1880 he married Mary Ann Cooper, daughter of John Cooper and Mary Ann Lewis, in the St. George Temple. I have heard mother tell of their trip from Fillmore to St. George. Of how there was snow on the ground when they left Fillmore but in St. George the roses were in bloom.

They lived in Fillmore for a few years and then when the dam was built on the Sevier River, they moved to Deseret to help settle that part of the country. When the Deseret Ward was divided, father was called as a councillor to the Bishop of the new Ward of Hinckley and was living there when I was born April 3, 1899. My brothers and sisters older than I were all born either at Fillmore or Deseret or Hinckley. John Lewis was born after we came to Canada at Spring Coulee.

I have often wondered why they moved away from Utah and came to Canada. I know that the Church leaders advised them to come to Canada instead of going to Mexico, where some of Father's folks had settled. A nephew of Father's wrote and said if you want to make money go to Canada but, if you want to live your religion come to Mexico. However the church advised us to come to Canada. Francis M. Lyman, President of the Quorum of 12, said that it would be pleasing to the Lord and the brethren if we came to Canada, so we came.

I have often wondered what kind of a woman would leave a good home, comfortable living, friends and relatives and follow her husband on a trip like that, and what kind of a man would take his wife and family on a trip 800 miles or more over almost unsettled country all by themselves to a practically new country. What would induce these people to such an adventure?

A few years ago, Phyllis and I went back to Hinckley for a visit and to mark the graves of my brother Clyde and my sister May. I knew my father had been back to Utah a time or two many years ago but I wondered if he would have had enough money to put up a permanent marker at their graves. I was fortunate enough to find an old record of the grave yard where they were buried and it gave quite a good description of where the different people were buried in the early settlement of Hinckley and I located these graves and was able to have them marked permanently.

The man who was taking care of the graveyard happened to be a distant relative of ours and in talking with him he made this comment: "I wonder why Uncle Thomas

moved away from here. It looked like he had every thing going for him here. He had a good farm, a nice home, lots of good cattle, some fine work horses, He was in the bishopric here, he was a fine musician, he lead the choir, and he and his brother, John Jacaway, had some of the best race horses in the whole country. They could have cleaned up big. He had everything."

When he said that, I thought to myself, that answered my question. He had no desire to raise his family in a place where horse racing played a prominent part in their style of living. I know that some of my cousins were expert horsemen and did a lot of riding as jockeys at the race tracks.