
Obray Family History

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Thomas L. O'Bray was born in Wales in 1824. He joined the Mormon Church when he was 13 years old. Eight years later, he began to preach the gospel in England, and with Lorenzo Snow, he preached in Italy, France, and Germany. Later, he went to Norway and Denmark.

In Canada, where he went after being in Denmark, he met a family by the name of Shelton; they had just joined the church.

A few months later, he married Louisa Shelton, daughter of David and Bertha Shelton, and two weeks later, he and his wife, together with her brother, Albert Shelton and sister, Martha, started for the United States.

Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Wellsville, Utah, and during the following years, five children were born to them. Then one year later, Thomas married Caroline Brenchley, who became the mother of nine children.

Two years later, he married Ruth Bradshaw, who became the mother of thirteen children, and thus became the father of twenty-seven children.

In the year of 1862, he and his family moved to Paradise, Utah, where he resided until his death.

Thomas had all the advantages and disadvantages of a new country, but through foresight and industry, he gathered around in land and herds and was able to feed and clothe and educate his large family.

I have known him to raise as much as 1,600 to 2,000 bushels of grain, 500 head of sheep, 20 or 30 hogs, and in the fall, he would grind from 1,000 to 1,500 pounds of flour, and kill five or six hogs. He would take these to Salt Lake City, and would come back with a load of goods, consisting of clothes, shoes, hats, and other things needed by the family. He would select a dozen pairs of shoes or more, hats and other wearing apparel. Generally, they would fit some member of the family, but I have worn number eight shoes when a number five would have been much better. I guess father thought that the more leather he could get for the money, the better deal he had made.

I think I wore the first overcoat in Paradise. Father bought it in Salt Lake City for \$2.50. The collar was greasy and worn, so mother fixed it by making a velvet collar from an old hat she had, and the first time I wore it, one of my girlfriends came up and said: "Well, George, where did you so much coat?" I told her that all of it but the collar came from Salt Lake. I wore that coat for five or six years, and then Father told me I had taken such good care of it that I deserved another, so the old coat was passed on to one of my younger brothers.

Some years ago, I was a missionary in England. Many times when they found out I was a Mormon, they would say: "Oh, you belong to that outfit that has so many wives and the children are all deformed." I told them that there wasn't a man in all of England who could tell them more about the Mormon and their wives than I, for my Father had twenty-seven children, and not one of them was deformed, even to a finger or toe.

Furthermore, all could read and write, and at that time, sixteen of them were married, and all lived on their own farms, and in their own homes.

They often looked at me and said: “Well, you are a brave man to come 6,000 miles to tell that to the world, and we cannot but believe you, because you look like an honest man.”

To try to tell you how many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and children there are in my father’s family are almost impossible, but should you desire to learn about them, and then come to my home in Paradise.