

# William Stevens and Emma (Crowden) Stevens



*A Family History*

by Shelley Dawson Davies

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## Chapter 1

# English Heritage

## William and Emma



*Friarn Street, an important Bridgwater lane since medieval times.*

**B**ridgwater, a bustling market town located along the Parret River, had been home to the Crowden family for several generations when Emma<sup>1</sup> was born there at the dawn of England's Industrial Revolution in 1823. Everything from transportation to the structure of society itself was changing as steam power and new production methods transformed manufacturing from hand to machine. The resulting abundance of goods found ready markets across the empire, creating prosperity and a higher living standard never before known.

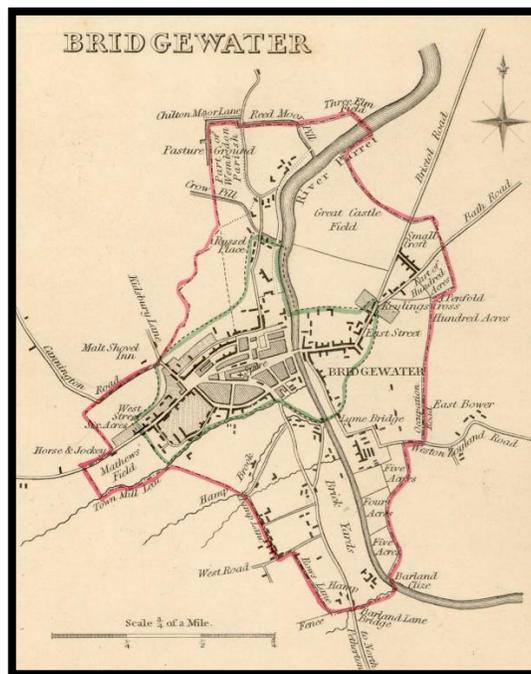
For Emma's father, Isaac,<sup>2</sup> the resulting economic growth meant more business for his tailoring shop, a concern he managed from a rented storefront along Friarn Street,<sup>3</sup> one of Bridgwater's oldest commercial thoroughfares. In an age when all clothing was stitched by hand, the tailor's trade attracted well-to-do people who could afford to pay for the skilled custom work Isaac provided. Years of training and apprenticeship taught Isaac how to measure a customer, draft and cut

a pattern, fit and finish a range of fashionable pants, coats and vests. He took on as apprentices his several of his own children, including Emma,<sup>4</sup> who spent her days stitching near the windows where the light was best.

By the age of nineteen Emma had met Joseph Stevens,<sup>5</sup> a strapping blacksmith from the nearby village of Broomfield in Sedgemoor. She was delighted to marry Joseph at Bridgwater's Holy Trinity church in October, 1842,<sup>6</sup> and set about managing her husband's large house. When Emma gave birth to little Emma Jane<sup>7</sup> a year later in October, 1843, all seemed well with the little family, but within two years Joseph was dead from pneumonia.<sup>8</sup>

Emma's parents agreed to care for their granddaughter, who became as much a member of the family as their own children. Emma Jane remained with the Crowdens, even after her mother's remarriage to William Stevens<sup>9</sup> in 1847.<sup>10</sup>

William, also a Bridgwater blacksmith,<sup>11</sup> was likely Joseph's cousin. William and Emma settled in Durleigh and later Enmore, villages not far from Bridgwater where William tended a small orchard<sup>12</sup> and Emma became a mother to five children: Sarah Ann,<sup>13</sup> Henry,<sup>14</sup> Ellen,<sup>15</sup> Percival<sup>16</sup> and Augusta.<sup>17</sup>



*Bridgewater, Somerset, in 1835.*

## The Gospel Truth

One day in the summer of 1855, William encountered missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as they made their way through Somerset, preaching of the gospel restored by Joseph Smith. The young men made a deep impression upon William, who found himself contemplating their message while he worked. “As I was pruning my trees and pondering on all the teaching of those missionaries, I said to myself, ‘is this renewed gospel true?’” he later recalled. “The answer came with such force—yes! This renewed gospel is true that my pruning knife fell from my hand and I stood there with this great knowledge vibrating and thrilling my heart and soul. Then I went into the house and told my wife Emma, ‘This gospel is true and I am going to America.’”<sup>18</sup>

Emma, who had already suffered enough upheaval in her life, was happy with her comfortable home in the country and had no intention of leaving. She chided her husband for his foolishness, but William remained convinced, especially after a comparison study of the Bible and the *Book of Mormon* proved the pair of scriptures were consistent.<sup>19</sup> William was baptized on 19 August, 1855.<sup>20</sup> Faced with William’s strong testimony and determination to join the Saints in Utah, Emma finally gave in. She was baptized in 25 May, 1856.<sup>21</sup>



*Goods shipped along the River Parret made Bridgwater a bustling inland port town.*

## Bound for Zion

A week later the Stevens family was lined up at the Liverpool docks with one hundred and forty other LDS immigrants, waiting to board the *Wellfleet* for Boston. Emma would never again see her parents, but she was not about to leave behind thirteen-year old Emma Jane, who agreed to make the journey to America.<sup>22</sup> At seven years, Sarah Ann was old enough to board the ship behind her father when the time came, but five-year old Henry and three-year old Ellen clung tightly to their mother's skirts and had to be gently nudged ahead. William carried little Percival, who was a toddler of two years, while Emma cradled four-month old Emeline in her arms.

Emma supervised as the family settled into their berths below deck. The children were excited by their new accommodations, but soon took to their beds with seasickness as the ship ventured into open waters. A day or two into the voyage when stomachs had settled, the passengers were assigned turns at the cook stove for meal preparation. "We had two very large stoves," said fellow emigrant William Smith. "The small stove had a guard around it to keep the kettles on. The larger one had none. The people brought their kettles and pots and pans to have their breakfast cooked. Some had rice and some gruel. Some tea, and some coffee, some one thing and another. There was quite a mixture."<sup>23</sup>

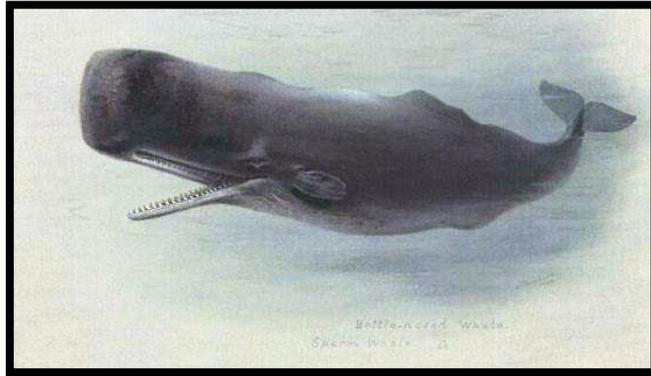
There was also quite a mixture among the passengers aboard the *Wellfleet*, who could not have been more diverse. In addition to the well-organized Saints, who held daily prayer meetings and carried out housekeeping duties under the direction of Elder John Aubrey, there was a large group of Irish emigrants fleeing the potato famine. They were such a rough lot that William Smith wrote, "Before we got through the Irish Channel, I heard one of the seamen say, 'Before we land at Boston, there will be a man killed on this vessel.'" Elder Aubrey appointed four brethren to stand four-hour night watches at each end of the ship to keep an eye on things.<sup>24</sup> Emma was happy she had sewn William's twenty dollar gold pieces into the hem of her heavy silk skirt for safe keeping.<sup>25</sup>

The weather during the two-week voyage was a mixture of calm skies and troubled waters. Some days the sea was rough enough to roll and pitch the ship until it "gave a reel like a drunken man trying to stand on his feet." Luggage and other belongings were tossed around the decks, while pots and pans in the passenger galley were thrown to the floor. "When the people came to see if their breakfast was cooked, they found that they had to get a fresh supply. Some laughed, and some cried and some swore. I thought it was a mean trick of the vessel to serve the people," said William Smith.<sup>26</sup>

As the storm gathered strength, waves grew so large they were “more like a great mountain for miles in length,” and so violent they “dashed against the vessel as though it was going to dash its sides in,” according to Smith, who noted how sailors scurried to lower the yards and loosened the sails, which were “caught by the howling wind and snapped with a report like that of a gun while the ship rolled from side to side and the spray came flying over the bulwarks. Amid these conditions the cry of ‘Fire! Fire!’ came from below. The captain and mate dashed down the gangway to the Irish quarters and soon reappeared with a son of Erin, the cause of the alarm; he had set fire to his bunk by smoking his pipe in it. The officers soon smothered the fire and then proceeded to well douse the cause of it.”<sup>27</sup>

The seas eventually calmed, but by the time the *Wellfleet* sailed into New York harbor for customs inspection, there was a storm brewing between the cook and second mate. An argument over coffee turned violent when the second mate, a man named Turner, tried to force his way into the galley. The cook stabbed Turner twice “in the pit of the stomach” with a four-inch pocket knife, leaving Turner bleeding heavily on deck. The first mate “turned up his sleeves and got a pistol to shoot the cook,” while eight sailors “drew their knife and commenced to flourish it about their head and dancing in a circle saying that each one would kill his man,” said Smith. It took the captain’s authority to calm things down, and he ordered the cook put into irons until the ship docked. There wasn’t a soul on board who didn’t recall the seaman’s prediction, “Before we land at Boston, there will be a man killed on this vessel.”

The *Wellfleet*’s passengers were transferred by steamboat to New York City’s entry station at Castle Garden where they were required to pass a medical examination before proceeding to their final destination. The ship arrived Boston on 13 July, 1856. Not all of the Saints were financially prepared to continue to Utah that year. William and Emma were among those emigrants who remained behind in New York City seeking employment to cover the costs of outfitting themselves for the trail west.<sup>28</sup>



## A Whale of a Story

*According to a family tradition, little Percival fell ill with whooping cough and vomiting early into the voyage, causing the Wellfleet to become threatened by a pod of whales which “smelled the sickness and followed the ship,” as the story was told. “Because the ships were small in those days, a whale could raise a huge tail and damage the ship or tip it over. Finally the captain had to tell William that they were going to throw the sick child overboard. Emma begged the captain to give her one more day and he agreed. Emma prayed all night to God that if he would heal her little child and keep him from such a terrible fate, that she would be faithful to this restored gospel and know that it was true. The next morning her little boy was well and there were not any whales following the ship.” See Mary Bigelow Edwards, “What I Know About My Grandfather William Stevens,” typescript, 1954.*

*With hundreds of first-time seafarers routinely becoming ill during the first few days of any voyage, the idea that the stomach contents of one small toddler would be enough to attract whales is unlikely. More probably, Captain Westcott may have been concerned about the spread of disease onboard, but even so, it is hard to believe he would murder a small boy by tossing him into the sea.*

## Crossing the Plains

It would be four years before the Stevens family was ready to leave for the Salt Lake Valley. They signed on with the Franklin Brown Company, an independent outfit composed of fourteen wagons and sixty immigrants which pulled out of Florence, Nebraska, on 9 June, 1860.<sup>29</sup>

William drove and cared for the oxen, while Emma, heavily pregnant with her seventh child, accomplished all of her regular household duties from the back a ten-foot wagon. She baked bread, beans and bacon over a smoky camp fire every evening, washed the dishes in a pan of gray water and helped the children make their beds on the ground. Before turning in herself, Emma made sure everything was prepared for breakfast the next morning, as an early start on the trail was important.

A little over two weeks into the journey, Emma went into labor. William made her as comfortable as possible by piling up blankets and pillows in the wagon bed where Emma struggled on through the night. The next day began like every other, but the company had not travelled far when Captain Brown “requested to camp as a little stranger was about to be ushered into the world, Bro. Steven’s wife being safely delivered of a fine boy,” said company member Charles R. Savage.<sup>30</sup> Little Theophilus Franklin<sup>31</sup> was born just shy of the Platte River crossing on 27 June, 1860.

Several hours later the company packed up and rolled on toward the Platte. It was a rough ride for Emma and her newborn; crossing the river proved even more difficult as the Stevens’ wagon tipped over in midstream, dumping mother, child and all of the family’s possessions into the water. Somehow Emma and baby Franklin emerged from the disaster unharmed, even though a small cast iron stove had fallen onto them.<sup>32</sup>

The company pressed forward day after day, enduring bad roads, torrential thunderstorms and clouds of flies and mosquitoes. They noted passing landmarks of Chimney Rock, Devil’s Gate and South Pass, marking how many miles remained until they arrived in Zion. By the time the train reached the Weber River Valley, thirty-five miles from Salt Lake, a few members of the company decided to put down roots right there among the Saints who were cultivating farms in Summit County.<sup>33</sup> The remainder journeyed on, arriving in the Valley 30 August, “as the sun was just setting.”<sup>34</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Emma (Crowden) Stevens (1823-1901), #KWJV-58G, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), where verification of all vital dates can be found. Also see family group sheets at [www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com](http://www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com)
- <sup>2</sup> Isaac Crowden (1792-1875), #LH17-J3Z, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>3</sup> Isaac lived at #14 Friarn Street in 1851, at #97 in 1871. See: Isaac Crowden household, 1851 England census, enumeration district 1g, Class: HO107; Piece: 1925; Folio: 181; Page: 4; GSU roll: 221082; and Isaac Crowden household, 1871 England census, enumeration district 2, Class: RG10; Piece: 2385; Folio: 33; Page: 17; GSU roll: 835107, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>4</sup> Emma is listed as “tailoress” at the age of eighteen in the 1841 England census. Her brother Jabez is listed as a tailor (1851 England census) and sister Charlotte as a dressmaker (1871 England census). See: Isaac Crowden household, 1841 England census, Class: HO107; Piece: 971; Book: 4; Civil Parish: Bridgwater; County: Somerset; Enumeration District: 7; Folio: 24; Page: 39; Line: 1; GSU roll: 474611. Also see: William Phillips household, 1851 England census, enumeration district 1j, Class: HO107; Piece: 1945; Folio: 294; Page: 31; GSU roll: 221105; and Isaac Crowden household, 1871 England census, enumeration district 2, Class: RG10; Piece: 2385; Folio: 33; Page: 17; GSU roll: 835107, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>5</sup> Joseph Stevens (1803-1845), #LWTX-V69, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>6</sup> Stevens-Croden (Crowden) marriage, 23 Oct 1842, Holy Trinity church, Bridgwater, Somerset, England. FHL film #1526376, ID 21, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>7</sup> Emma Jane (Stevens) Barnes (1843-1918), #LWYJ-S7S, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>8</sup> Joseph died 19 February, 1845. Alta E. Stevens, “William Stevens and Emma Crowden,” undated typescript, <http://famhistory1867.com/wmstevens.html>
- <sup>9</sup> William Stevens (1819-1902), #KWJV-58L, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>10</sup> Emma Jane is shown living with her grandparents in the 1851 England census.
- <sup>11</sup> William Stephens household, 1851 England census, enumeration district 1, Class: HO107; Piece: 1924; Folio: 191; Page: 8; GSU roll: 221081, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>12</sup> Mary Bigelow Edwards, “What I Know About My Grandfather William Stevens,” (typescript, 1954). Copy available through the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- <sup>13</sup> Sarah Ann (Stevens) Mecham (1846-1886), #K2HN-Q17, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>14</sup> William Henry Stevens (1849-1913), #L4TQ-Q1X, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>15</sup> Ellen Christiana (Stevens) Neel (1851-1927), #KWVQ-4T5, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>16</sup> Simon Percival Stevens (1854-1898), #K2MW-6XP, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>17</sup> Emeline Augusta (Stevens) Neel Bigelow (1856-1918), #KWCB-541, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>18</sup> Edwards, “What I Know About My Grandfather William Stevens,” typescript, 1954.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> Alta E. Stevens, “William Stevens and Emma Crowden,” undated typescript, <http://famhistory1867.com/wmstevens.html>
- <sup>21</sup> “William Stevens-Emma Crowden family group sheet,” supplied 1997 by Afton D. (Mecham) Davies. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted.
- <sup>22</sup> William Stevens entry, passenger list, the Wellfleet, Liverpool to Boston, 1 June-13 June, 1856, [http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM\\_MII/t:passenger/id:53931/keywords:william+stevens](http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:passenger/id:53931/keywords:william+stevens)
- <sup>23</sup> William Smith, “Journal and Diary of William Smith,” 1 June, 1856-13 July, 1856, [http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM\\_MII/t:account/id:1240/keywords:william+stevens](http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:account/id:1240/keywords:william+stevens)

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Edwards, "What I Know About My Grandfather William Stevens," typescript, 1954.

<sup>26</sup> Smith, "Journal and Diary of William Smith," 1 June, 1856-13 July, 1856.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *The Millennial Star*, Vol. XVIII, pages 377, 521, 542.

<sup>29</sup> Franklin Brown Company, Florence, Nebraska, to Salt Lake City, Utah, 9 June- 4 September, 1860, <https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companyDetail?companyId=71>

<sup>30</sup> Charles R. Savage, *Diaries 1955-1909, vol. 3*, June-September 1860. Online at <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=71&sourceId=4857>

<sup>31</sup> Theophilus Franklin Stevens (1860-1879), #KF3N-LSP, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>32</sup> Eliza Hortin Stevens, as related to daughters Nettie Stevens Hall and Leone Hall Wilde, "William Henry and Eliza Hortin Stevens." <http://famhistory1867.com/wmhstevens.html>

<sup>33</sup> Savage, *Diaries 1955-1909, vol. 3*, June-September 1860.

<sup>34</sup> Lydia Seamons Crowther, "Autobiographical Sketch," <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=71&sourceId=4855>

## Chapter 2

# Pioneers in Utah

### A New Way of Life

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*A view of Summit County's mountains near Wanship.*

The Stevens family<sup>35</sup> were among those who left the Brown Company before it rumbled west over the mountains into Salt Lake City, settling along the Weber River in the fall of 1860.<sup>36</sup> William built a sturdy log cabin not far from Wanship's original settlers, Stephen Nixon and Henry Roper, whose place at the convergence of Silver Creek and the Weber River became the center of the small town. William helped Nixon and Roper dig a crude irrigation ditch to channel river water across the six acres of land they tilled together with a shared team of oxen. Clearing land was a job for every available hand, including the women. While the adults and older children tore up and burned sagebrush, four-year old Emeline was tethered to a nearby tree to prevent her from wandering away into the wilderness.<sup>37</sup>

Several other pioneering families moved into Wanship in 1861, attracted by the fertile soil and abundant water supply, all hoping to make a living from the land, but their survival was threatened by the difficulties of high-altitude farming. Even planting crops of wheat,

barley, rye, wild hay and garden vegetables, all suited to the valley's short growing season, a good harvest was never guaranteed at an elevation of 5,880 feet, where frost was sometimes recorded every month in some years. William was rightfully proud of his hard-won fields.

By the time nearly three hundred Ute Indians set up camp nearby that fall, food was in short supply. Fortunately for the slowly starving settlers, Chief Wanship taught them how to live off the land by harvesting edible plants and tracking game. He also set up a barter system between his tribe and the whites, who were so grateful for his help they named their town after him.<sup>38</sup>

Wanship, less than a half mile south of the main overland route into Salt Lake City, was the perfect place to build a stagecoach station, and by 1862, a small building was constructed to serve as both a mail drop and rest stop for Salt Lake bound passengers. In addition, a new and better road was constructed through Silver Creek Canyon, resulting in a tollgate five miles from Wanship. Wagons and stages were charged \$1.00 to travel this improved and shorter route to the Salt Lake Valley. The road not only increased traffic and prosperity for the town, but made it possible to build a mill, putting an end to the hazardous two-week trips to Salt Lake for flour.

The Stevens prospered along with everyone else in Wanship as they expanded both their farm and family. Emma's last two children were born there, Thomas<sup>39</sup> in January, 1863, and Abby<sup>40</sup> in November, 1865. Two weeks after Abigail's birth, eighteen-year old Sarah Ann married Hyrum Mecham<sup>41</sup> and moved into a nearby cabin to begin her own family. William and Emma became grandparents the next October with the birth of Sarah Ann's son, Hyrum.<sup>42</sup>

That same year Wanship was chosen as the seat of Summit County and a log courthouse was set up in the center of town, not far from a one-room school house, where eight grades were taught by Mr. Boudy. The Stevens' younger children, including Henry, Ellen, Percival, Augusta, and Franklin were among those who attended class when farm duties allowed them such freedom. Their fellow students from surrounding farms walked to school both ways in good weather, and hitching wagon rides into town during the cold or rain.



*William and Emma built their first Oakley home near this location along State Road 32.*

## On to Oakley

At the same time Wanship was beginning to develop into one of Summit County's more important towns, there was cause for nervousness among its residents as a wave of Indian unrest spread along the Weber River in 1866. The Stevens joined other families in the valley who gathered nearby for protection at G. G. Snyder's Wanship ranch. It was a particularly frightening time for the children, according to Emeline, who recalled her alarm one night when she had been left at home to watch over Franklin, Thomas and Abby. "They had eaten supper and had gone to bed, when Mother heard that frightening Indian war cry," said Emeline's daughter, Mary Edwards. "She got up quickly and looked out of the window. There she saw them down by the Weber River with a big bonfire, dozens of wild Indians waving their tomahawks, dancing around the fire, yelling and chanting their Indian war cry. The other children awoke and hearing it, came running to look out of the window. They began to cry and say, 'Oh, what can we do? They will come and kill us and set fire to our home.' Mother said, 'Come we will kneel down and pray and the Lord will take care of us.' They did and they were taken care of. Mother watched the Indians for hours after she got the younger ones back to bed and asleep, until their fires burned low and they got on their Indian ponies and rode away to the next town."<sup>43</sup>

William was among the men who formed a militia and took turns standing lookout from the surrounding peaks to alert residents of any danger from either the Indians or a pair of criminals who had escaped into the valley in 1867. Local constable James Hixson caught up with the outlaws, holding them in his Wanship cabin overnight as there was no jail. “The criminals were given the bedroom while the family stayed in the kitchen for the night. Although the family spent a nervous and uncomfortable night, the criminals gave no trouble and returned peaceable to Salt Lake City with the constable,” according to historian Marie Ross Peterson.<sup>44</sup> Eventually the Indian and outlaw troubles subsided, allowing families to return to their farms along the river, although a handful of people purchased lots from Snyder and remained at what became the center of town.

Life in town with all of its problems was losing appeal for William and Emma, who decided to relocate eleven miles south to a new area known as Oak Creek, where William often grazed his cattle. The Stevens made do by living in a dugout along the creek banks during the summer months of 1867, and although most of their crops were lost to swarms of grasshoppers, they remained optimistic about their claim. Thirteen-year old Percival agreed to winter over with the neighboring Marion Frazier family, tending to his father’s cattle until his parents returned to settle permanently in the spring of 1868.

Emma wasn’t about to spend another summer living in a dugout with seven children, and insisted William build a suitable home. She chose a spot near the river where there would be plenty of water and where she could see the mountains peaks to the east.<sup>45</sup> William spent most of the summer making trips to the nearby canyon to cut down native pines and haul them back home. He took pride in constructing what was not only the first permanent residence in the area, but what was considered a large home at the time, complete with two upstairs bedrooms, a kitchen and main room downstairs, all built on a solid stone basement.<sup>46</sup>

## Cutting Timber

William wasn’t alone harvesting trees in the canyons, which teamed with men from nearby towns in search of logs for fuel and construction materials. Not only were more homes being built as the population of Summit County increased, but the quickly advancing railroad created a booming market for wooden ties. The rush was on to finish the transcontinental railroad, and with it came track from branch lines connecting important mining towns like Coalville and

Park City to Salt Lake City. As tracks were laid across the mountains and down Weber Canyon, there was a demand for thousands of ties and there was no better source for them than Summit County.

William and Henry, now a strapping young man of eighteen years, tilled their fields all summer, but after harvest was over, they joined the mountain logging crews until spring. They took turns chopping down mature trees with an ax and saw, stripping away branches and stacking the logs along the river in preparation for the spring snowmelt. Logs were dropped into the roaring streams as soon as the waters were deep enough. The melt lasted from a few weeks to several months, and it was important to float as many logs as possible, as the few roads into the timbering areas were dangerous and difficult to use. Those who tried transporting logs from the steep mountainside often experienced overturned wagons and injured horses.

When they weren't taking down trees, the Stevens men walked along the river armed with spike-tipped poles, keeping stray ties in line and preventing jams which, when they formed, could span the river for as much as a mile and become solid enough to walk on. The men dressed in thigh-high boots that allowed them to wade into the river to dislodge the jams, a very dangerous job calling for agility and skill, as they were sometimes caught in between logs as the jam broke up. Sometimes tie drivers were forced to wade into the water as far as their armpits. "The men would jump into the cold water early in the morning and be in and out of water all day. At night they were so tired they would roll into bed with wet clothes still on. Sometimes they rolled out of bed with clothes steaming. It took sheer courage and a lot of hard work to run a drive," wrote fellow driver John Seymour.<sup>47</sup>

The logs were pulled from the river at Wanship and cut into ties at one of the two sawmills operating along the river, where as many as thirty men and teams found employment over the winter. The finished ties were hauled by ox and horse teams to railroad construction zones in between Coalville and Park City. The demand for ties continued into the 1880's when the Union Pacific and other branch railroads were being built to connect towns in northern part of the state.



*Cutting timber in one of Utah's forests near the turn of the twentieth century.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>35</sup> Although the Stevens' sixteen-year old daughter, Emma Jane, is listed among the members of the Franklin Brown Company, she does not appear in the 1860 U.S. census, taken on 20 June, when the train was eleven days out onto the trail. Since the only death in the Brown Company was that of a two-year old girl, Emma Jane may have married, either on the trail or soon after arriving in Utah. According to William and Emma's granddaughter, Mary Bigelow Edwards, Emma Jane "married a Mr. Barns while they lived in New York and remained there. They had five children." A search of both the 1870 and 1880 U.S. census for women with the last name of Barns born in England failed to result in further information. See: Franklin Brown Company, Florence, Nebraska, to Salt Lake City, Utah, 9 June- 4 September, 1860, <https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companyDetail?companyId=71> Also see: "Arrival of Emigrants," *The Mountaineer*, 1 September, 1860, <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=71&sourceId=9391> ; and Mary Bigelow Edwards, "The Story of Mary and Her People," 1954. Mrs. Edwards was a granddaughter of William and Emma Stevens through their daughter Augusta (Stevens) Neel. [http://www.rawlins.org/histories/html/bigelow\\_mary\\_and\\_people.html](http://www.rawlins.org/histories/html/bigelow_mary_and_people.html)
- <sup>36</sup> Eliza Hortin Stevens, as related to daughters Nettie Stevens Hall and Leone Hall Wilde, "William Henry and Eliza Hortin Stevens." <http://famhistory1867.com/wmhstevens.html>
- <sup>37</sup> May Sorenson, *The Falling Leaves: A History of Oakley, Utah* (privately printed, 1964), page 20.
- <sup>38</sup> Karri Dell Hays, "Pendleton House," Summit County Historical Society, [http://www.summitcounty.org/history/wanship/pendleton\\_house.php](http://www.summitcounty.org/history/wanship/pendleton_house.php)
- <sup>39</sup> Isaac Thomas Stevens (1863-1930), #KW6Z-332, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>40</sup> Abigail Charlotte (Stevens) Watterson (1865-1903), #K2HN-ZK7, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>41</sup> Hyrum Moroni Mecham (1842-1917), #KW6D-C37, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>42</sup> Hyrum Smith Mecham (1866-1940), #KWCX-347, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>43</sup> Edwards, "The Story of Mary and Her People," 1954.
- <sup>44</sup> Marie Ross Peterson, *Echoes of Yesterday: Summit County Centennial History* (Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1947), page 190.
- <sup>45</sup> The cabin stood at approximately 4666 North State Route 32 in Oakley. *Ibid*, page 225.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, page 192.
- <sup>47</sup> Lou Jean S. Wiggins, "History of Summit County," *Pioneer Pathways* (Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1999), page 133.

## Chapter 3

# Final Resolve

## The Circle of Life

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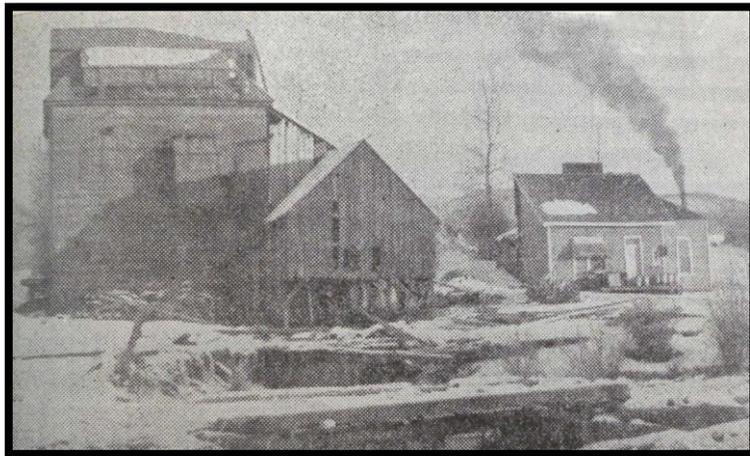
*Oakley's church reflected in the nearby mill pond.*

William and Emma's children were quickly becoming adults by the time they settled in Oak Creek. Back-to-back weddings took place in early 1870, when Henry married Eliza Horton<sup>48</sup> on New Year's Day, followed by Ellen's marriage to John Neel<sup>49</sup> on 28 February. Emma sent fourteen-year old Emeline to live with the Neels in nearby Peoa for the birth of Ellen's first child in December, 1870, little realizing this would result in Augusta becoming John Neel's second polygamous wife eight months later.<sup>50</sup>

Even as her family grew with the addition of marriages and grandchildren, Emma's life remained constant. She began the day even before William arose to tend to the cows, making sure he had something hot to eat by the time he returned from milking. When she wasn't kneading dough or stirring a pot of thick soup, Emma was baking pies or putting up bushels of vegetables she grew in the cool green garden out back. Self-sufficiency was more than a virtue on the frontier, it was the only way to survive and Emma was proud of the way she kept her family fed and comfortable.

Oak Creek eventually became known as Oakley with an increasing population and the establishment of several mercantile concerns along Main Street. Although William and Emma were content with their farm and pleased to be surrounded by so many of their children, they both agreed to sample a simpler life as their strength faded with age. They were attracted to Brigham City, ninety miles north on the Wellsville mountain slope, where wide streets and large blocks allowed them to garden and raise a few animals right there in town. William even had room to set up his forge and continued taking on jobs from neighbors who needed any number of wagon and tool repairs. For her part, Emma skills at tailoring earned a few extra dollars, especially with the church's new woolen mill located nearby.<sup>51</sup> Franklin, Thomas and Abby were enrolled in school and the entire family attended church at the new tabernacle on Main Street every Sunday. All was well until the death of nineteen-year old Franklin, who was taken by diphtheria in the spring of 1879,<sup>52</sup> but they soldiered on, doing what they could to care for their surviving children. The Stevens had a knack for making the best of things.

Back in Oakley, Percival had agreed to manage his parent's property, and Emeline, newly divorced, moved in with her three daughters to take care of the house.<sup>53</sup> Emeline remarried in April, 1881, moving with her new husband<sup>54</sup> to Randolph in Cache County. Thomas married in 1884 and returned to Oakley, establishing a home not far from Sarah Ann and Hyrum Mecham, who had taken over the Steven's old log cabin, and set about raising stock and crops. The Stevens were dealt another blow when Sarah Ann died of cancer in January, 1886, leaving nine dependent children behind. When Abby became Mrs. Charles Watterson<sup>55</sup> later that same year, William and Emma returned to Oakley to be near their children and grandchildren. It was a comforting decision, one they never regretted.



*W.H Steven's grist mill and creamery in Oakley.*

Henry, or W. H. Stevens as he was often called by then, had done very well for himself since his marriage twenty years previously. In addition to running a large herd of cattle, he owned and operated both a sawmill along the river and a grist mill in town. He had recently built a fine brick home where he, Eliza and their eleven children lived, and helped his father construct a “comfortable, sturdy home” nearby, a four-room house with a rock floor and a swing in the basement for the grandchildren.<sup>56</sup>

William lent a hand with his sons’ farming concerns and kept up with local ranching affairs. When a sudden drop in nearby Park City silver prices spread economic depression to towns all over the county, farmers and ranchers banded together to form the Livestock Association of Oakley in 1893, electing William as president.<sup>57</sup> Noted “for his honesty and industry,”<sup>58</sup> William provided leadership in helping the association achieve its goal of aiding small farmers with only a few head of milk cows to market their butter and milk as far away as Salt Lake City, thanks to quick delivery via rail. Henry opened a creamery to process raw milk from surrounding farms as well as his own, producing high quality ice cream and cheese.

## All Due Respect

Caring for their own house and yard finally became too much for William and Emma, who accepted Henry’s invitation to live with his family in the big brick house.<sup>59</sup> Emma still enjoyed visiting her daughters from time to time, and arranged a trip to Salt Lake City in the winter of 1901 to spend time with Abby and her children. It was while she was at the Watterson home that Emma died, on 4 December.<sup>60</sup> She was seventy-eight years old.

Some years before William had purchased a piece of land in Oakley to serve as a family burial ground, and it was there he laid to rest his wife of fifty-four years. William followed Emma in death fifteen months later on 8 March, 1902. His passing was noted not only by local the *Inter-Mountain Farmer*, but also the *Deseret News* and *Salt Lake Tribune*, newspapers which eulogized him as “pioneer of Summit County” who “did much to make it what it is now and, with a few others, suffered the hardships of making homes in the cold region of our state.”<sup>61</sup> William and Emma left a proud legacy of faith and fortitude for their nine children and many grandchildren.<sup>62</sup>



*William had this large stone placed at Emma's grave in the Steven's cemetery.*

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>48</sup> Eliza Alice Maria (Horton) Stevens (1848-1926), #KWV3-4WV, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>49</sup> John Austin Neel (1845-1883), #KDTK-NJB, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>50</sup> 21 August, 1871. Edwards, "The Story of Mary and Her People," 1954.

<sup>51</sup> William Stevens household, 1880 U.S. census, Box Elder County, Utah, population schedule, town of Brigham City, enumeration district 4, page 59D, FLH film #1255335, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

<sup>52</sup> Edwards, "The Story of Mary and Her People," 1954.

<sup>53</sup> Percival never married. According to Augusta's daughter Mary Edwards, Percival "was in love with the neighbor's daughter, but went away to make his stake and did not tell the sweet young thing that he was in love with her and was coming back to marry her when he made his

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stake. When he came back she was married; so, he never married.” Edwards, “The Story of Mary and Her People,” 1954.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Bigelow (1842-1941).

<sup>55</sup> Charles Pierce Watterson (1856-1930).

<sup>56</sup> The home was located at 1101 Cow Alley, according to granddaughter Isabelle Jensen. Edwards, “What I Know About My Grandfather William Stevens,” typescript, 1954.

<sup>57</sup> Marie H. Nelson, *Mountain Memories: 1848-1986* (Enviro Graphics, Kamas, Utah, 1986), page 105-106.

<sup>58</sup> *The Deseret News*, 17 March, 1902.

<sup>59</sup> William Stevens household, 1900 U.S. census, Summit County, Utah, population schedule, town of Oakley, enumeration district 139, page 18B, Roll T623-1686, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

<sup>60</sup> *The Coalville Times*, 21 December, 1900.

<sup>61</sup> William Stevens, *The Intermountain Farmer*, 18 March, 1902; *The Deseret News*, 17 March, 1902; *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 March, 1902.

<sup>62</sup> William may have added a plural wife to the family. A second wife, Ingar (Svensson) Lundmark (1821-1914), #KWJF-HNC, is shown on both the family group sheet provided by Afton D. (Mecham) Davies and records on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), but to date no confirmation of this marriage has been found. The 1870 U.S. census shows forty-year old Elizabeth Stevens “keeping house” with William, Emma and their children, but no relationship is noted and Elizabeth has not been found in other censuses. See: Waloel (William) Stevens household, 1870; Census Place: Rhodes valley, Summit, Utah Territory; Roll: M593\_1612; Page: 132A; Image: 268; Family History Library Film: 553111, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

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