

A Sketch in the Life of the Thomas Widdison Family of Scotland and England

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by Lucy Widdison Holms

Our grandfather Thomas Widdison, was born in Sheffield, Yorkshire, England, 6 May 1806, the son of Samuel and Hannah Widdison (never been able to find her maiden name). Our grandmother Janet Russell Widdison was born in Chapel Hall, Lanarkshire, Scotland, 20 February 1812.

Thomas left his home in Sheffield and went to Scotland to work for Robert Russell Jr. who was a file cutter. Thomas went to learn the trade. It was there where he met Janet whom he married later.

The parents had embraced the Gospel and desired to join the Saints in America. They left Chapel Hall, Scotland on 3 March 1853 with their family who were as follows:

Agnes, born	28 December 1830	At Shotts Iron Works, Lanark, Scotland
Hannah	15 January 1838	At Sheffield, Yorkshire, England
Henry Thomas*	6 June 1841	At Chapel Hall, Bothwell, Lanark, Scotland
Robert Russell	21 March 1844	At
William Livingston	21 September 1846	At
John*	1848	At
James Gourley	12 January 1853	At

*Henry Thomas and John died as children, so there were only five children who were with Thomas and Janet.

On March 26 the ship Falcon sailed from Liverpool, England with 324 passengers. They went steerage, as emigrants chiefly do, in the bottom of the ship. They took care of their own food and sleeping accommodations. The ocean was very rough and this voyage took almost eight weeks. They arrived in New Orleans 18 May 1853. From here they were taken up the Mississippi River to the mouth of the Missouri to Florence, Nebraska. Here they were met by an emigrant train of ox teams and wagons waiting to take them to the valleys of the mountains.

Appleton Harmon was captain of the company. They arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah, 16 October 1853. The first house they were in was the home of Elizabeth Gray, Grandma's sister in the 17th Ward facing the Chapel on 1" North.

Robert and William went to school there that winter. In the spring, these two boys 10 years and 8 1/2 years of age were sent out to West Jordan, to make their home with Mathew Guant's family, and work in the "Wollen" Mill, to make a living for themselves and help their family. The boys worked all day with the men, then in the evening they had all the chores to do. One time they decided to give up their job and went home, only to be sent back for two or more years. The Gaunt Family left the Church and went back east. The boys had learned to put up with many unpleasant things such as making a hole in the wool for a bed, all sorts of inconveniences, helping to prepare them for the future.

Their first home that I know of was a log house built on the corner of 6th West and 3rd North. The two young boys, Robert and William were pleased to get back with their family, but they soon obtained a yoke of oxen and hauled wood on shares. Following this they hired out to a freighting outfit to go to Nevada. It was getting so late in the season that they couldn't bring their outfits back, as there was no feed along the way for the animals. There was just one conveyance to "cary" food and bedding and what other things they had to have on the trip back to Salt Lake City, which took 15 days. The drivers had to walk 450 miles, and they got home just a few days before Christmas. There was always that fear of being molested by the Indians.

We have record of several trips these boys took back to Nebraska for emigrants by ox team which took five months for each trip. The boys would sleep on the ground, and sometimes they would be covered with snow by morning.

There were so many things to be taken care of in those days. Our father Robert had ended one of these five month trips in September and the next June 1867 he was called by Major Broomhead, to take part in the Black Hawk or Indian War. He was in Captain William Binders Company, stationed at Gunnison. He was gone three months, and 16 days. He was paid \$212.00 for his services. Every Memorial day they place a flag on his grave.

Uncle James was much younger than Thomas and William, so I guess he didn't take part in those trips. I just remember he used to work for the railroad before they moved to Hooper.

Grandfather Thomas Widdison died on the 5th of May 1876, then grandmother lived with us for eleven years. We lived on the south half of this lot, and Uncle James built a brick house right on the corner. Uncle William had a home on 6th West facing east on the next block south of us. My father Robert, moved to Park City, 1889 and back to a new house at 462 North Pugsley St., in August 1897. Uncle William's folks had gone to Idaho, and Uncle James and his family to Hooper, so when we moved away Grandma lived in Hooper for five months. She died 14 November 1889. She was buried in Salt Lake City.

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This history was written by Lucy Widdison Holms, especially for her cousin Rachel Widdison Westover, who at the family reunion in Hooper, Utah in 1962 expressed a desire for some of this information.

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