

THE LIFE HISTORY OF JAMES JOSEPH KEEP

by Himself

James Joseph Keep, son of James Joseph and Ann (Evens) Keep, was born 25 Sept., 1804 in Acton, London, England. He died in Lehi March 14, 1899 and was brought to Clarkston and buried by the side of his wife and youngest daughter, Maria Jane Keep Wilson

My father died when I was five years old and left my mother with four children. My father was only twenty years old when he died. I was brought up by my grandfather and grandmother for a few years. I had but very little schooling. I had to go to work to keep myself. My mother married again and I was put to take care of sheep and cows. While a little boy I had no home. I stayed with friends 'till I grew up to a young man.

Then I was engaged to work for a gentleman taking care of his horses and cows for some time. Then I worked for a farmer and a florist for some time, and after that I did any kind of work I could get to do. Finally, I apprenticed to a bricklayer to learn the trade.

At twenty-one I married a widow with a family, by the name of Elizabeth Pair. We lived together for nine years, then she died. July 25, 1836, I married Ann Miller, daughter of Joseph and Ann (Elkins) Miller. Then I began to seek for a religious life. I joined the Wesleyan or Methodist Church. I was with them for nine years. They had to break up because they couldn't pay the rent. I never could tell what the Kingdom of God was. I was left alone for a time. My father-in-law asked me to go to the Baptist Chapel to sing and play the flute for them. I went to the meeting for seven years but I couldn't believe in water to wash away sin. I never joined them. I stayed with them until the new Minister came and he didn't desire a special singer, but wished the Congregation to sing. I told my father-in-law that I would not stay to hear him preach any longer. My wife and I left the chapel and went to the Independent Chapel, where we remained for four years.

Then two young men came near my home preaching the true Gospel and my wife told me to go out and hear them. I soon found that baptism was to be born of the water and the spirit. When they came again to preach, I took an long bench for the people to sit on. That night I inquired for the meeting house. I saw John Banks at some of the meetings and heard the Saints speak in

tongues. A brother that knew me well talked with me and said, *You have been seeking a long time but have not found the right way yet.* I made up my mind to go with him.

On Sunday morning at five o'clock I was baptized. It was on the 23rd of July, 1848, by John Legg. I didn't hear a word about the Prophet Joseph Smith or Brigham young until I had been in the Church for some time. I can say that I never knew what God was until I came into this Church. My wife and daughter were baptized in 1848.

I was soon called into the Priesthood, being ordained a Deacon August 5, 1848, by Thomas Squires. I made wine for the sacrament for two years, providing the fruit myself. I was ordained a Priest on the 19th of Jan., 1851, by Thomas Squires, and set apart to travel and preach the Gospel in the open air. I traveled many miles on Sundays, some times as many as 15. I would take some bread and butter in my coat pocket and would sit by the side of the road to eat it; then I would call at some house and ask for a drink of water and proceed to another place to preach, getting home at ten o'clock. I have preached the Gospel every summer in England for 19 years.

I was called by the President of the London Branch to travel in Kent, Essex, Sunset and Dawn, where the King was beheaded. I have opened Branches of the Church there. I also traveled in Berkshire, Devonshire and Wiltshire.

I left England May 28, 1866 and arrived in Salt Lake City in October 1866. We were on the sailing Vessel for six weeks and two days. The vessel was called the *American Conquest*. (*American Congress*) While on the ocean we came near being drowned, as the ship nearly struck the breakers. While on the plains, I took Mountain fever and was very sick.

I was ordained a High Priest Sept. 21, 1866, by Bishop Wooley in Salt Lake City and had my Endowments while there. I moved to Clarkston, then to Newton. I moved back to Clarkston in 1870. I built a rock house; also had a farm and a garden I took care of for many years. I built chimneys for the people here and in Newton. I have lived in Polygamy. I have done Temple work for my dead ancestors.

I am the Father of eleven children, nine girls and two boys. Six girls lived to womanhood, married and had large families, and were faithful Latter Day Saints. The other five died in England. I sold my farm in 1892 and moved to Lehi for two years. Then I moved to Clarkston for four years; then to Newton to my daughter's place. (Ruth Keep Griffin) My wife died while there and I was left alone at the age of 91. I then went to Lehi to my daughter Mary Turner's to end my days.