

HISTORY OF LUCY DAVIS DAVIS (1806-1896)

by Lola Davis Bitton (Great Granddaughter)

Lucy Davis was born 14 November 1806, at Stoke Abbott, Dorsetshire, England. Her father's name was Samuel Davis and her mother's, Philis (Phyllis) Fossey Davis. She was the second child in the family, having four sisters and two brothers. Of her early life we have no record. She married William Davis, who was the son of William and Sarah Grippy Davis. He was six years older than she, being born in 1800 at Witch Dorsetshire, England. To them were born fourteen children. Their first child was a girl, Mary, born 5 September 1824 when Lucy was but 18. In about ten months another girl, Lydia, was born. Their third child was also a girl named Sarah, born 6 November 1827. Their fourth and their first son, Joseph, died at birth in 1829. Then came another girl, Elizabeth, on 6 March 1831. The next four children were all boys; George born 4 November 1833; Henry born 5 December 1834; John (who was my grandfather) born on 30 October 1836; and Joseph (second) born 28 December 28, 1838. He died at the age of 18 months. The two girls Ann were born 16 November 1840, and Jane was born 19 December 1842 and in 1845 another son, Samuel was born and he died at birth.

About this time in their lives Elder William Kendall brought to them the message of the gospel. Lucy was then 41, the mother of twelve children, nine of whom were living – three boys and six girls. They listened to the gospel as Elder Kendall preached it to them, believed it, and gladly accepted it and so were baptized and confirmed by George Kendall on 13 February 1847. Lucy was the first person in the town to accept the gospel. In 1848, on September 27, her 13th child, William, was born. On 25 September 1851, a baby girl, Lucy, was born and given her mother's name. Baby Lucy died 28 March 1853 when she was 17 months old.

Since accepting the gospel it had been the earnest desire of William and Lucy to migrate to Utah. They were very poor. The father worked out on farms and the children had to go out and work as soon as they were old enough. My grandfather said that at the age of seven he had his first work. That was going out in the grain fields to scare the crows away. He had to keep moving and waving his arms. When he grew older he advanced and was given the work of washing the horses in the stables and later was hired to help do farm work. They were small so that it was necessary for them all to work in order to make enough to eat. His father had to go to work so early in the morning that he hardly ever saw his family. He had to leave home before daylight in order to get to the farm where he was working and get the horses ready and he did not get home until after dark at night. It was many years before they were able to save enough money to go to Utah. They finally saved enough to send their oldest son, George, to Utah. He sailed from Liverpool for Utah on April 13, 1853 on the ship "Cornermills" and landed in New Orleans. He went up the river on the "Ellen Scott" to St. Louis. He crossed the plains in John Brown's company and arrived in Salt Lake City, October 16, 1853 and went to Bountiful in the fall of 1854. He went up Echo Canyon with the company of men who went to meet Johnston's Army. He worked to prepare a home for his parents and brothers and sisters and also to get money to help them.

It was 1855, eight years after they had accepted the gospel, that they were able to begin their journey. They sailed from Liverpool March 31, 1855, on the ship JUVENTA (or Seventer). They were on the ocean for seven weeks and most of the time during very stormy weather. They landed in New York, and then from there they took the train and went to the river where they

took the steamboat and sailed to the place where they were to take teams and cross the plains. Here they stopped to rest and get provisions ready. The food on the ship had been so poor and the journey so hard that Lucy's husband, William was really very sick at this time. They finally gathered provisions and equipment and started their journey across the plains, but even after eight long years of saving, sacrificing and planning that they might live among the saints, William was never to realize the desire he had so close to his heart. On the first night out on the plains he died – on August 12, 1855. This was about twelve miles from Atchison, Kansas. John, his son and my grandfather, were not at the wagon when his father died. The men in the company took turns standing guard. Because of his father's illness, John was guarding for him. As he was returning to the wagon, his father appeared to him. Not knowing of his father's death, he became so frightened that he hurried on to the wagon. There he learned of his father's death and then he knew that it was his spirit that appeared to him. As near as John could tell, his father was buried on the very spot where he had appeared the night before. And so Lucy was left at the very beginning of the long trek across the plains with her large family of children, and at this time she was age 49.

Because their eldest son, George, was already in Utah it fell to the lot of John, who was then 18, to take the place of his father as much as possible. He drove one of the wagons and took his turn standing guard at night. No doubt the long trip across the plains was very hard for Lucy, especially with the added burden of sorrow because of the death of her husband and the entire responsibility of the family being on her. Her trials were by no means ended for her daughter, Elizabeth who was age 24, also died and was buried on the plains.

As they neared the Salt Lake Valley, George, the eldest son who was preparing for them, came to meet them. He took them to Bountiful, ten miles north of Salt Lake City, where he had a farm rented for them. They lived there until 1858 when they went to Provo with the rest of the Saints when they heard that Johnston's Army was coming to drive them out. After things were at peace they returned to Bountiful and gathered their crops. They continued to live there for some time. Gradually Lucy's children were married and began to scatter. Some of them moved to Idaho. John, my grandfather, married Jane Caroline Lesueur and they moved to Montpelier, Idaho, later going to Arizona to make their home. After her children were all married and settled in homes of their own, Lucy went to live with some of her children in Idaho. She died August 13, 1896, at Wilford, Idaho of old age. She lacked only three months of being ninety years old.

1.