

Biography of Thomas Lorenzo Obray

Source: http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=902

Thomas Obray was baptized in the parish of St. Mary's, Pembroke, Wales in 1823, the sixth of ten children born to John and Elenor (Allen) Obray. The family lived on Queen Street at Pembroke Dock where John worked as a shipwright.

In the early 1840's, Thomas may have moved to Sheerness, Kent, England as he is not listed in John and Elenor's household on the 1841 census. On December 11, 1845, John fell from a considerable height off one of the stages round a vessel into one of the building slips and was killed. His wife, Elenor, moved to Sheerness where she died December 3, 1848. During the 1840's members of the family joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Thomas was baptized into the church on September 25, 1844.

The 1851 Census of Great Britain shows Thomas Obray living in Sheerness, age 25. He was probably working in the shipyard there. In February 1852, Thomas is listed as a missionary who served in presidency of the Swiss-Italian mission in Nice and Malta. When Apostle Lorenzo Snow was in charge of missionary work in Italy in the early 1850's, he saw the island of Malta as a possible jumping off point for carrying the gospel to other countries in the region. After a visit to Malta in 1852, he left Elders Jabez Woodard and Thomas Obray in charge of missionary efforts there. A close friendship developed between Thomas and Lorenzo Snow and Thomas took the middle name Lorenzo later in life.

On March 22, 1854, Thomas emigrated to the U.S. on board the steamship, 'City of Manchester.' The ship stopped at New Brunswick, Canada and picked up the Shelton family. Thomas joined the Shelton family on their way to St. Louis, Missouri. He married Louisa Shelton June 24, 1854 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. During their journey to Salt Lake City, Louisa died of cholera, a bride of three weeks.

Thomas continued on with the Shelton family and arrived in Salt Lake City on September 29, 1854. On October 17th, Thomas married Louisa's sister Martha. Five children were born to Thomas and Martha.

On August 2, 1857, Thomas married Caroline Benchley at the Endowment House at Salt Lake City. Brigham Young sealed them in his office. Nine children were born to Thomas and Caroline.

Thomas moved his families to Cache Valley, Utah where they spent one winter at Maughan's Fort. In April 1858, Brigham Young ordered the outlying settlers to move south as there was word on Johnston's Army being sent west. They left their homes and moved to Brigham City temporarily. They returned to Cache Valley in the spring of 1859. As land was open for homesteading, Thomas moved to Petersburg. It was about this

time the settlers who were in Paradise were counseled to relocate where the present town of Paradise is located, and Petersburg was incorporated into the Paradise settlement.

Thomas homesteaded the site where the church farm is now located, what was then called the 'Springs.'

On April 30, 1864, Thomas married Ruth Nuttall Bradshaw as his third wife. Thomas and Ruth had 14 children. Ruth remained at Maughan's Fort while a log house was built for Martha and her family at the 'Springs.' Another home further south was built nearer the hill road for Caroline and her family.

When Martha suffered a stroke in 1881, Caroline moved down to the 'Springs' home to care for her. Ruth and her family moved from Maughan's Fort to the corner log home and joined the others in helping on the farm.

On June 21, 1882, Thomas was called to serve another mission in England. His older sons took care of the families and the farm in his absence.

Martha died on May 24, 1887, and a year after her death, Thomas was sentenced to the Utah Penitentiary for 11 months (May 24, 1888 - April 1, 1889) for unlawful cohabitation. He was sentenced a second time a year later and served from April 24th to August 9th, 1890.

As Thomas became older, lots were purchased in the town of Paradise at 299 West 8800 South, and homes were built for Caroline, Ruth, and their families. Thomas Lorenzo Obrey died on October 21, 1899.