



WILLIAM HEBER TAYLOR

1873-1955

William Heber Taylor was born 19 April 1873, in Harrisville to Pleasant Green Taylor and his third wife, Jane Narcissus Shurtliff, early Harrisville pioneer settlers. On 4 May 1873, he was given a name and blessing by his father. William Heber was the youngest in a family of seven, five boys and two girls: John Emerson (1858), Nephi Fernando (1860), Green (1862), Elizabeth Jane (1865), Lydia Emaline (1868), Orson Shurtliff (1870), William Heber (1873). With his brothers and sisters and half brothers and sisters he learned at an early age the spirit of cooperation necessary for a large family to live together in harmony and love.

On 1 May 1878, when William was five years old and his half brother Walter was four years old, they set fire to their father's barn and sheds. As the fire reached its peak, they crossed the road to their Aunt Mary's home, where they were asked if they had started the big fire. In innocence they replied, "We didn't start that big fire; we only started a little one." The barn and sheds burned to the ground.

On 6 June 1881, William Heber was baptized in Harrisville by Richard Daniel Brown, and then confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Dudley Chase. He was ordained a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood 4 May 1886, by his father, Pleasant Green Taylor.

William attended Harrisville School as far as the "eighth reader." He and the other students went to school bare footed to save their shoes for special occasions. He engaged in all the local activities, including playing the trumpet in the Harrisville Brass Band.

On July 19, 1893, William married Melissie Thomas in the Logan Temple. They became the parents of nine children. There were seven boys and two girls. They all grew to maturity with the exception of William Heber who died at the age of four months. The children were Alphonzo William (1894), Nellie Irene (1895), Beatrice (1897), William Heber (1899), Nephi Green (1901), Milton Bailey (1903), Gailord (1905), Clifford (1907), and Ronald Patrick (1909).

William took up farming early in life. After marriage, he purchased fourteen acres of land for \$823.00 from his father, and built their first home. He needed additional land to make farming successful, so on 1 May 1895, he purchased a homestead in Blackfoot, Idaho. He first turned to the grain and feed business in Ogden, and then to railroad

construction. Finally, he began his own construction business while he was operating a store in Harrisville. He also built and operated fish ponds in Harrisville and Slaterville. The Slaterville operation ended when someone broke the fish pond dam and let the fish into Four Mile Creek.

William was appointed State Road Agent for two years beginning in 1916, and then was appointed Deputy State Road Commissioner for Weber County. While serving in these offices he supervised the construction and maintenance of all the state roads in Weber County, and built the Liberty Dugway, which connected Liberty in Weber County to Paradise in Cache County.

After leaving the road commission, he organized the Taylor-Child Construction Company, which later became the Union Construction Company. While directing these construction companies, he built roads in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Nevada.

William lived in Harrisville and had a deep loyalty for his home town. On one occasion, he was approached by Bishop Brown and told the ward owed \$600, and that the people had no means to pay the debt. The Bishop suggested that each of them should pay \$300. This was done, and nothing else was said. When the addition to the church was constructed in 1913, William furnished the equipment and did the excavation. Another time he supplied the equipment necessary to fill in the swamp on the church grounds. For years he furnished the explosives to signal the opening of the celebrations on Memorial Day and the 24th of July. He was unselfish in making Harrisville a better place to live.

William left many monuments to his skill as a builder. The roads in Bryce Canyon that open the beautiful views to millions of tourists were built under his direction. The roads built along the north fork of the Salmon and along the Salmon River in Idaho opened beautiful country that was almost isolated. He constructed many of the roads and bridges out of Montpelier, Idaho. He constructed railroad grades in Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming, including the original railroad bed into the Ogden Arsenal. He constructed a one mile tunnel from Pine View Dam through Mount Lewis to North Ogden, which was the beginning of the Highland Canal. In Ogden and Weber County he constructed streets, roads, sewers, water lines, bridges, curb and gutters and other projects.

When William retired, he sold his original Harrisville home to his oldest son Alphonzo and his wife Annie. That home was removed in 1940 to make way for the Defense Depot. William and Melissie then built a new home [1249 North Harrisville Road] next to their son Nephi Green and his wife Ada. This new home was built on the original property Pleasant Green Taylor purchased in 1851. Ada commented that Melissie was never too happy with her new home. Melissie preferred her old one.

On August 25, 1946, Melissie passed away. She was a wonderful wife, mother, and grandmother. She was a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ to the end. Three years later on 4 February 1949, William married Alice Crowther Cowles Call, whom he had known all his life. Alice passed away on 5 May 1955.

In 1953, there were four generations including William Heber, Nephi Green, Nephi Junior, and Kim Nephi all living in Harrisville, their homes within in half a mile of each other.

Prior to William Heber's death, he lost his memory and had mental lapses. Once he lit a fire on top of his stove. For his protection he was hospitalized in Provo, Utah where he died 28 June 1955. He is buried in the Ogden City cemetery.

William Heber grew up in a polygamist family when it was an accepted way of life before the church adopted the manifesto to stop the practice in 1890. His father, Pleasant Green Taylor, had four wives. Though the LDS Church members no longer practiced plural marriage, it was a part of William Heber's upbringing, and may have influenced his second family of four children that he had with Phoebe Thomas, his wife Melissie's sister. His children with Phoebe included a daughter Mildred (1906) and a son William Stanley (1908) were both born in Idaho. Roland Heber (1909) was born in Harrisville and Keith Lamar (1914) was born in Ogden. There are no records to show that William Heber Taylor and Phoebe Thomas were ever legally married.

William Heber was excommunicated from the LDS Church in May 1910. He was rebaptized on 18 June 1949. Church records show that all his former blessings were restored about sixteen years after his death, 28 June 1971. Phoebe Thomas died 10 September 1962. Church records show that she was rebaptized, and was sealed to William Heber after they were both deceased, 17 November 1971.

It can be assumed that at some point Melissie was aware of William's transgressions with her sister, and also, that she knew of William's excommunication from the church. What Melissie knew, and how she managed this burden remains a question. There is no information that explains how the relationship between William and Phoebe started, or why it existed. We do know that Melissie withheld William's transgressions from their children, because the first time William's and Melissie's children heard that they had three half brothers and a half sister was the day of William Heber's funeral. They were surprised and shocked, even embarrassed, to learn of another family fathered by their father, William Heber.

SOURCE:

Hawkins, Debra Taylor. Family information.

Taylor, Clifford M. "Life Sketch of William Heber Taylor." Unpublished manuscript.

Taylor, Kim Nephi. William Heber Taylor, 1873-1955. Unpublished manuscript.

Brown, Richard Daniel	Taylor, Kim Nephi
Chase, Dudley	Taylor, Lydia Emaline
Cowles, Alice Crowther	Taylor, Melissie Thomas
Emerson, John Emerson	Taylor, Mildred
Shurtleff, Jane Narcissus	Taylor, Milton Bailey
Taylor, (Aunt) Mary Shurtliff	Taylor, Nellie Irene
Taylor, Ada	Taylor, Nephi Green
Taylor, Alice Crowther Cowles	Taylor, Nephi Junior
Taylor, Alphonzo William,	Taylor, Orson Shurtliff
Taylor, Beatrice	Taylor, Pleasant Green
Taylor, Clifford	Taylor, Roland Heber
Taylor, Elizabeth Jane	Taylor, Ronald Patrick
Taylor, Fernando, Nephi	Taylor, Walter
Taylor, Gailord,	Taylor, William Stanley
Taylor, Green	Thomas, Melissie
Taylor, Jane Narcissus Shurtliff	Thomas, Phoebe
Taylor, Keith Lamar	