



LIFE STORY OF SAMPSON EDGAR AND SARAH CHATTERTON POTTER

Compiled by Helen Greenland, Great-Granddaughter

Sampson Edgar Potter was born 9 November 1839 in Kersley, Lancashire, England, the fifth child of William Potter and Letitia Smith. Sampson's grandfather Potter was a very rich man and he didn't like the crown. He was told if he didn't get his things in order the crown would take them away from him. He didn't do it and they did take them away and left him a pauper.

Kersley is a village and township in Deane Parish, Lancashire. There are extensive coal mines and various manufacturing establishments there.

Sampson's mother died of Typhoid Fever when he was almost fourteen. His father married Jane Fletcher who had been the nurse when his mother died. Sampson always insisted his mother wouldn't have died if it hadn't been for that woman and he used to call her "Auld Jane". She didn't prove to be a good stepmother and Sampson and his brothers left home as soon as they were able to support themselves. Sampson went to work in the mines at St. Helms in Lancashire.

On 1 January 1861, he married Sarah Chatterton. Sarah was born 25 August 1842 in Kersley, Lancashire, England, the only daughter of Thomas Chatterton and Rachel Hulbert. She had an older brother John but he died at the age of four leaving Sarah to grow up as an only child. Her mother died when Sarah was eighteen.

Twelve children were born to Sampson and Sarah. The first ten children were born in various places in Lancashire, England, all within a short distance of each other. In addition to Kersley, they were (1) Bolton, which dates from the time of the Saxons and began as a market-town by Royal Charter in 1256 and made some figure in several parts of history; (2) Farnworth, was a seat of cotton manufacturing and the iron trade and also the place where for sometime the largest paper-works in the Kingdom were carried on; (3) Worsley, which carried on cotton manufacturing, iron-work, brick-making and had extensive coal mines; (4) Swinton where cotton manufacturing and brick-making were carried on; and (5) Barton-upon-Irwell which found employment for many of its inhabitants in a silk mill and three spinning mills. There were listed variously as towns, parishes, or districts.

Their children were John, Rachel, Eliza, Elizabeth, Joseph, Sydney (Sidney) Edgar, Noah, Jessie, Ethel Agnes, Thomas Chatterton, Parley Smith and Edward Hulbert (known as Ted). The third, Eliza, died at the age of two and one-half years and is buried in England. At least one daughter, Rachel, worked in the mills before coming to America.

Sampson was very proud of his family and was a good provider. He always saw that they were well-dressed and that they had a good home. Like Sarah, he was very strict with his children and at the same time very kind. On Sundays he always took his family on walks when they could enjoy the out-of-doors. He was particular about his own appearance and on Sundays and Holidays he wore a black broadcloth shirt and a huge silk hat, called a stovepipe hat. His hobbies were fishing and flowers. No matter where he lived he always had a flower garden and never sold the flowers but always gave them to someone. He was President of the Angling Club in Lancashire for sometime and went on many fishing excursions and won many prizes for his skill as a fisherman. He would bring home live eels for the children. Sarah would never allow candy in her home.

Their son, Noah, recalls the following about the place they lived in on Moorside Lane, Swinton, which was near Manchester, Lancashire, England.

“We lived in a brick house, two-story with six rooms. The kitchen floor was stone flags with a fireplace in it with a hole on one side and an oven on the other side.

“On Christmas I hung my stocking by the side of the fireplace because Santa Claus came down the chimney and Santa filled my stocking with candy, nuts and an orange. Of course, we had them like the kids do in this country. We didn’t get toys on Christmas. We got new clothes, clogs (no shoes) and a lot of good things to eat on Christmas and New Year’s.

“Day or night you could travel on a paved sidewalk.

“The games we kids played were marbles, football, hopscotch and hide-and-seek. We celebrated May Day, Easter, Christmas and New Year’s and had to go to school an eleven-month year.”

It was a rather odd way the Potters first heard of the Latter-Day Saint Church. One day a neighbor lady that lived across the road from them came to the door and said “Mrs. Potter here are some things that you might like to read. They are about a new church. My husband used to go to their meetings but I have him going with me to my church now and don’t want him to have them or he might go to them again.”

After the neighbor left, Sarah looked the papers over, then put them away until she had more time to read them. Later she read them to Sampson and the family. Sampson had never been a church-going man, although he always wanted the family to go. After hearing some of the tracts read to him, he said: “Now this sounds more like the Bible Church” and he began to hunt for someone who could tell him where the meetings were held. They finally found the place several miles from their home. They had to walk there but soon decided this was the right church. The first meetings were held in a house in Pendlebury. There were very few Saints there at the time the Potter family were baptized.

On 23 September 1879, Sampson was baptized by John Collier and confirmed on 28 September 1879 by James Berry. Other members of his family, who were old enough, were baptized on 29 November 1879 by Oscar F. Hunter and confirmed 30 November 1879. After Sampson was ordained an Elder he was made President of the Moorside Branch of the Church. He had formerly been a member of the Church of England.

It wasn’t long before the house wasn’t large enough to hold all the people that were in the Branch and they had to get a room to meet in. Many good times were had there.

After they joined the church, people in their neighborhood and also their relatives would have nothing to do with them. They called them “dippers” and would cross the street before they would speak to them.

“That part of England where we lived was a coal region and had factories where men and girls worked. The streets were paved and walks ran down the center of the lot and beautiful flowers and roses grew.

“Lying out from our backyard was Lord Elsmere’s Estate with the most beautiful fields and plantations of trees and in the shadows of this forest was a nice pond with water lilies growing around. A large tree had fallen in the edge of the water and in the shade of it the little Jack Sharp Fish shone like silver. I could go there and catch them and put them in a bottle. I had permission to do so from the game keeper.

“Not very far from home was a great football field, a race track and Lord Elsmere’s stables with the finest race horses and heavy draft horses in the world. On the Lord’s estate lived pheasants, partridges, and rabbits of all colors and kinds.

“About one mile from home was a ravine with a small creek running down it, with fish in it but hard ones to catch. On the slopes of the ravine grew wild apples and blackberries. There were also beautiful birds like Skylarks singing there. This was indeed a child’s paradise.

“The Lancashire English people are great for sport and pleasure. I remember the good tea parties the people had at different times. My father was an expert carver and he used to cut ham and other meats and cakes for these parties. Good eats, good drinks, good singing, good clog dancing and good order was the program.

“About one-half block from home was Midgeley’s large clothing store. Across the street was a nice butcher shop and grocery store, and down the lane one-quarter of a mile was a beer parlor.

“The streets had gas lights along them so you could see well at night. The houses were lit up with gas and places of amusement also had gas lights.

“In the winter time, there was a reservoir about one-half mile away that froze over where skaters used to go and have a fine time on the ice.

Sarah was good to the missionaries and always had a place for them to sleep and good meals for them and did their washing for them. She and Sampson always saw that they had money enough to travel to the next place.

After joining the Church, they began to want to come to Zion. Sampson left his home in Kersley, England, sailing on the ship “Nevada” from Liverpool, on 11 April 1883 and came to Utah to find work and prepare a home for his family here. He obtained work in the coal mines at Pleasant Valley (Winter Quarters), Emery County (later Carbon County), Utah, and in 1884 sent for his family.

Their son Joseph came to America in April 1882 with a missionary by the name of Joseph Carlisle. He did not arrive in Winter Quarters until after his father had arrived. In May 1884, Sarah and the other members of the family had saved enough to send three of the remaining boys (John, Sydney and Noah) to America and they did not tell Sampson they were coming. They were going to surprise him and they surely did. They arrived in Colton where they had to change from the main line of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad to a branch line of the railroad to Winter Quarters. The road had been washed out by a flood and they walked the twenty-five miles in the night carrying their baggage. Noah, who was only eight years old at the time, was carried across the creek by an old man. They arrived in Winter Quarters before Sampson had gone to work and he was working his garden and didn’t see them coming. They walked up to him and said “Good Morning, Father.” He thought something terrible had happened to his family and the shock was almost too much for him.

Sarah and the rest of the family (Rachel, Elizabeth, Jessie, Ethel and Thomas C.) came to America in August 1884 sailing on the vessel "Wyoming" from Liverpool, England.

When Sarah and the others arrived in New York City they spent enough time there to arrange for things to take care of their needs while crossing the country by train. While waiting for the train, Sarah left their hampers and baggage and two of the young children with Elizabeth while she went to make some last minute purchases. After she left them, the train pulled up quite a distance and when she returned she couldn't find them and thought they had been kidnapped. But she soon saw two men bringing the children and baggage. They had thought they were being abandoned there.

While crossing the plains, the train stopped in the middle of a corn field one day and Sarah saw a woman in a farm house making flapjacks. Since they were all hungry for some fresh food, Sarah decided to go get some of the flapjacks. She got off the train and went to the farm house. While she was away the train started to move and she came running as fast as she could while the children cried and all the coach passengers thought she would surely be left behind. But the train master either saw her or heard the cries of her children and stopped the train and waited for her to get back on and they were soon all happily on their way again.

When they arrived in Salt Lake City, they spent a few days resting and seeing the sights under the guidance of some of the missionaries they had helped in England.

After settling in Winter Quarters, Sarah bore two more sons (Parley and Edward) and an incident that happened in England before they had any idea of ever coming to America was brought to mind.

Some gypsies came to her home one day and one wanted to tell her fortune. She didn't want the fortune but finally consented and the gypsy told her she could cross the great water and after that she would rock the cradle twice. This prediction had now come true.

When Sampson came to Winter Quarters he built a home at the very top of the canyon. He had the house pretty well finished when the rest of the family got there. It wasn't long after the rest of the family came, however, (about 1890) that he left Winter Quarters and settled in Cleveland. He first settled on a place called Desert Lake, beyond Cleveland, but it was all alkali soil and not a good place so he gave that up and took up a quarter section about five miles from town toward Price. His sons, John and Joseph, also took up land there adjoining their father's property.

Pleasant Valley, where they settled, was a luxuriant spot in the 1870s and settlers' cabins dotted the valley floor and the cattle grew fat on the lush grass. Then coal was discovered and it completely changed. In 1877, a small mine was opened on the western slopes of the valley and the coal was transported over a narrow mountain road to several

towns in Northern Sanpete County. The winter came early that year and was very severe and stranded miners in the coal pit. Because of the ordeal, they named the camp Winter Quarters. The mine continued operation until 1929 when the coal became suitable only for inexpensive locomotive fuel and finally the long underground transporting costs doomed the mine. By 1930, many houses had been moved to Scofield, and Winter Quarters was vacant.

Cleveland was settled in 1885 but because of low water supply many left and returned to their former homes. But in 1888 several people entered this lovely site with a determination to make a town and carve out homes from the native desert. The town was named after Grover Cleveland, President of the United States at the time it was settled.

Emery County was organized by authority of the Act of the Legislative Assembly passed 12 February 1880 and was a vast domain of Sanpete County. Emery County was named in honor of George R. Emery, then acting Governor of Utah.

The pioneers of Castle Valley were men who braved the dangers of isolation and conquered the arid deserts to found homes for themselves and children where peace and plenty would smile upon the future generations and children would rise up and bless the bold pioneers who opened the pathway to this chosen vale.

The areas were known as Castle Valley because of the innumerable castles or peculiar stone formations standing as sentries upon the mountain peaks and rimrocks surrounding the area.

Water had to be hauled to the farms from the Huntington River, ten miles away, and they had to ride ten miles on horseback to get supplies and the mail.

Sarah did not like the farm life so she stayed in Winter Quarters and kept house for the family there.

Another version of the story concerning why Sampson lived in Cleveland and Sarah in Winter Quarters is told by their daughter Rachel. She said: "One time Sarah went to town to get some supplies and before she could get back a bad storm and flash flood came up and made it impossible for her to get across the creek and get home. She stayed the night with some friends and when she got home the next morning Sampson accused her of being with another man and all sorts of things which were not true. He told her to get out and never come back, so she did and went up to Winter Quarters."

Their grandson, Noah Jr., said that Sampson and Sarah were both church attenders but there was a difference of opinion of some kind on religion and in their older years they split up.

Their daughter, Elizabeth, kept house for Sampson and the boys on the farm. The quarter section of land near the town that Sampson obtained proved to be a better place

than Desert Lake although there was still a great deal of work needed to get it producing profitably. A patent for land, Certificate No. 4061, says it was for the “north half of the north west quarter and the north half of the north east quarter of Section 11 in Township 17 south of Range 9 East of Salt Lake Meridian in Utah Territory containing 160 acres.” It was “given under the hand and seal of President Grover Cleveland, the 15th day of March in the year of our Lord 1894.” It was recorded in Book A of patents, page 495, Records of Emery County, State of Utah, at the request of their son, Joseph Potter, on 5 June 1907. One-half of the tract, or eighty acres was sold to their son John on 16 April 1895 for \$200, and recorded at the request of John on 4 June 1907. A water course location for Sampson Edgar and Joseph Potter was filed the 16th of March 1896.

William Tucker recalled how Sampson and William’s father were hauling hay one day and after they had unhooked the horses one of them became frightened when the ice broke under him and he jumped and landed on Mr. Tucker. He only lived a day or so after the accident. This accident happened on Sampson’s farm.

As soon as possible after he arrived in America, Sampson took out citizenship papers and he and his family became United States citizens. (There seems to have been no record made of this. A check has been made in both Emery and Carbon Counties for it and nothing has been found as of 1 January 1982. There was a Thomas Potter naturalized 30 July 1900 but there seems to have been two Thomas Potters so it is not certain this is the son of Sampson and Sarah Potter.)

Sampson took part in the development of that part of the State and helped build a canal, twenty-two miles long, to bring water to the farms of that section and also to build the Huntington Reservoir. All the work was done by hand.

On the farm, Sampson built a home of sawed logs. It was two stories and was lathed with willows and plastered. He did all the work of building the house. It had two large rooms upstairs and two rooms and a storage room downstairs. The house stood on a hilltop overlooking all the country around. A wash ran to the east of the place and his vegetable garden, orchard and flowers were planted between the wash and the house. He planted a wind break of Poplar trees all along the wash and had all kinds of fruit trees that would grow in the locality. He also had all kinds of small fruits, vegetables, and melons. He could take soil, run it through his fingers and know just how much fertilizer it needed. He could tell you what, if anything, would grow in it.

Sampson always had flowers, especially sweet peas, along the ditch bank the full length of the garden. He always gave his flowers away, especially to people who were sick and in trouble and said “God made flowers for making people happy.”

Some of the children were old enough to marry when they came to the United States. Rachel was the first to marry and she married Charles T. Greenland on 2 December 1885, in the Logan Temple. It was a long trip in those days to go from Emery County to Logan but if you wanted to be married in a Temple there were only two choices—Logan or St. George. The oldest son, John, married Jane Brown on 3

November 1886; Elizabeth married James M. Beatie, 27 November 1890; Joseph married Agnes McFarland, on 28 June 1899; Ethel married Eugene Maxwell, 16 August 1899; and Jessie married Matthias Pattinson, on 30 November 1899. Jessie had only been married six months and was expecting her first child when her husband was killed in the Scofield Mine Disaster on 1 May 1900. She later married Simon Welsh on 21 September 1908. Noah married Mary Ellen England on 20 December 1902; Sydney married Ruth Sanders on 20 May 1903; and Thomas C. married Elizabeth Eden, 21 June 1905 in the Salt Lake Temple. Rachel and Thomas were the only two children to have been married in the Temple but others went later and were sealed or the sealings were done for them after their deaths. Thomas married Harriet Eden Larsen, who was a widow, on 15 December 1954, after the death of his first wife. Parley married Ethel Charter Edwards on 25 April 1911. She had been married before to a Mr. Edwards. Edward (Ted) was the only one who didn't marry. He apparently became despondent for some reason and took his own life at age thirty.

Sampson had a large swing put up between two trees for his grandchildren to play on. His granddaughter, Helen M. Beatie, recalls her summer visits to her Grandfather's farm in this manner:

“We used to go there every summer. That was our vacation. Before school started we went to Grandpa's. We would take the train at Winter Quarters in the morning and then we'd change cars at Colton on to the main Denver and Rio Grande line and go to Price and Uncle Tom would meet us with the wagon and then we'd go the twenty miles in the wagon to Grandpa's. From then on it was one grand vacation. We had the whole place to ourselves. Everything was ripe then, the melons, tomatoes, apples, fruit and everything. He had a wonderful orchard, he had a wonderful farm, he was a real farmer. He'd always have cold melons for us. The little old house that they lived in first, he used for a store place and had a little bit of a portable cook stove, with a little oven in it. He used to bring melons up out of the garden and put them in there so they would be cold for us and then he had a five gallon oil can with a handle on top of it he used to put on the stove and fill with corn and we would have corn on the cob.

“We could go down in the orchard and pick anything we wanted. He had horses and we could ride them. He had cows and chickens and everything and he used to have the most delicious ham you ever ate. He would kill the pigs and then sugar cure the hams. He had a smoke house where he would have these hams all hanging up on the rafters and a milk house built down on the bank from the house, just like a cellar, with cupboards down there to keep the milk and all that kind of stuff, and a big reservoir for water for his stock just over the hill.

“There was a garden east of his house which was built on top of the hill and there was a big pond for the horses and his smoke house was built half way down the hill on one side and his orchard was off the other side and Uncle Joe's place was in the other direction across the field. My sister Geneve used to like Pottawatomie Plums and she made a little bag for herself with a string on it that went around her neck. She would fill that in the morning and go around eating plums all day.”

After all his girls were married, Sampson kept house for himself and took care of the farm. He lived at the farm until he was sixty-eight years of age.

On 14 August 1907, Sampson purchased one acre and 66-1/2 rods in Oviatt's subdivision of Cleveland townsite, from James and Elzina Johnson for \$550. On 17 September 1907 he sold the remaining eighty acres of his farm to James T. Johnson for \$3,000. On 7 June 1915, Sampson sold his town plot to his son Joseph for \$1.00 and 27 July 1917, Joseph sold it to Ida V. Litster for \$1,000. It is still in the Litster family to this day.

Sampson's house in town was a blue frame bungalow type and had four rooms on the ground floor and then an upper story. Errol Litster, whose parents bought the home after Sampson's death, remembers how well Sampson used to keep the place. He said he had a bunch of fruit trees on the north and he always raised a pretty good garden and he used to share some of the garden stuff with the Litsters. He had a wooden fence, with a two-by-four on top.

There were a lot of the miners who got infection from the coal dust. An old Indian Doctor came to Winter Quarters and she would visit the Potter home. One day she came and said the Great White Spirit told her she had to come. Sampson had an infection in his throat and was about to choke to death and the Indian Woman Doctor checked him and said he had an abscess. She told him to get a pipe and told him to smoke it. He told her he didn't want to smoke. She told him he had to in order to get the tobacco juice into his throat. When he got the abscess broken, Sarah had to get him across the bed fast so the poison would come out of his throat. Ever after that he had to smoke or the abscess would come back and he would have died. Sarah had to make him smoke in order to keep him healthy. He died in his chair with his pipe in his hand.

One of their sons-in-law ran the only store in Winter Quarters. It was a three-story rock building and carried everything, groceries, dry goods, everything you can imagine, that a town would want. At first they didn't sell meat but later built a building to match the main one just across the road against the mountain and used that as the butcher shop. Next to this shop was a cellar where fruit and vegetables, such as potatoes and apples, were stored. He also had a post office in one corner of his store.

Another of their sons-in-law was killed in the mine explosion at Winter Quarters on 1 May 1900. Their son Noah was working in Number One Mine when the mine exploded. He did all he could to save the lives of the men in the Number One and then went up to Number Four Mine and was one of the six volunteers chosen to enter that mine and they were able to rescue three men.

Their sons were good workers and the following comments were made by Noah Potter, Jr., about various members of the family.

“Joseph was a good farmer. He made most of his living working out on the farm. He raised pigs and cows. His wife would make butter and they raised chickens and had eggs. They would go about once a week to Hiawatha with the produce and animals.

“Noah played the harmonica and played with a band for dances every Friday and Saturday. He was quite a carpenter and builder.

“John was in business. He was bald so he ordered a wig through Ward’s catalog and it fit fine. He was a judge and a very strict one. People were afraid of him but later they would come up and shake his hand and thank him for the way he helped them. He was a Bishop in Sunnyside for a time.

“Sidney was a fine fisher and hunter. He was slim with a great big foot.

“Tom was a repairman and worked in a repair shop for thirty years.”

Mr. William Tucker tells of how he and Parley and Ted were friends and one time walked the forty miles from Cleveland to Winter Quarters. They had been herding cows and left them in the pasture and just took off.

Sampson was six feet tall, well-built, had brown eyes and curly sandy hair and a short curly beard. He talked with a Lancashire accent, and used the words “thee” and “thou” and one of his sayings was “Please thyself then thee will know one is pleased.” He would never ride anywhere he could walk. He would put on his good clothes, get his cane and walk. He had horses on the farm but never rode them. He said “People ride so much, one of these days they are going to be born without legs.”

Sampson gave his cane to Errol Litster. He was very proud of having it in his possession and did so until his death.

Sampson was active in the Latter-Day Saint Church until his death at his home in Cleveland, on 29 December 1916. He was buried in the Cleveland Cemetery on 1 January 1917.

Sarah was about five feet two inches tall, rather plump and she had dark brown hair and blue eyes. She was very kind, also very strict, and firmly believed that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. She was always kind to everyone and always ready to help anyone in trouble. She was always called to take care of the sick and she helped to bring a great many babies into the world. She was a very good cook and housekeeper.

During the winter of 1906, Sarah took care of her son Edward (Ted) through a case of typhoid fever. She contracted the fever and died from complications on 13 February 1907 at her home in Winter Quarters. She is buried in the Scofield Cemetery, Scofield, Carbon County, Utah, beside her son-in-law Matthias Pattinson.

Although Sampson was active in the church until his death he never took the opportunity to go to Manti and have his own Temple work done and neither did Sarah. Their work was done for them after their death by their son John. John had been very faithful in doing Temple work for his dead ancestors, along with his wife Jane, ever since the opening of the Manti Temple.