

## Graves Along The Way

*(A History of James Langton as Written by his Great-Great- Grandson Robert Smith Haws and submitted by Ruth Ellen Rasmussen Alvis. Also see History of his wife Ellen Haydock Langton)*

While sitting in the Temple on 4 June 1837, the Prophet Joseph Smith softly spoke to Heber C. Kimball. Brother Heber, the spirit of the Lord has whispered to me: "Let my servant, Heber, go to England and proclaim my gospel and open the door of salvation to that nation."

Feeling of his weakness, Heber asked the Prophet if Brigham Young could go also. "No Brother Heber, he will stay with me for the Lord has something else for him to do."

Nine days later Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Willard Richards, and Joseph Fielding, left Kirtland. In New York they were joined by Isaac Russell, John Goodsen, and John Syder from Canada. They left New York harbor 1 July 1837 for Liverpool on the packet ship "Garrick" arriving there nineteen days later. At Liverpool they were impressed by the spirit of the lord to go to Preston. On Sunday Morning 10 July 1837 Heber C. Kimball baptized the first of nine persons in the river Ribble. George W. Watt was the first person baptized in England.

Within four weeks Heber C. Kimball built up branches of the church in Eccleston, Wrightinton, Askin, Danbers, Lane Exton, Chorley, Hunters Hill and Leyland Moss where he baptized about two hundred people. As a result of their labors hundreds were converted and joined the church in England. Such a family was that of James Langton., my great, great, grandfather, a carpenter by trade. He married Ellen Haydock 9 April 1826. Ellen Haydock was born 24 August 1800 and resided in either Farrington or Ulnes Walton.

Little is known about their oldest child, a son, Aaron, who was born three months after their marriage. He possibly died in infancy. Next in age to Aaron was Mary Catherine my great grandmother, who was born 5 Dec. 1827 at Ulnes Walton, Lancashire, England. John was born 27 Sept. 1829, Seth was born 13 May 1832 and Robert was born 8 Mar. 1835.

Details of the conversion of the Langton family to the Latter Day Saints church are not known at this writing but the father James Langton was an active member of the Leyland Moss branch of the church in 1842 just five years from the time Heber C. Kimball opened the missionary work in Preston, England.

Record of the Leyland Moss Branch shows that James Langton confirmed an Alice Thorley in 1842. He also baptized a woman named Sarah Southwick in 1843 and Henry Finch in 1845. Seth was confirmed by his father at Preston in May 1845, and Mary Catherine was baptized and confirmed by her father in 1846. On 11 May 1850 Mary Catherine gave birth to a son named James, and an unknown father.

James Langton was the presiding Elder representing the Leyland Moss Branch of the church at the Preston Conference held 14 March 1847. The Branch included one Elder and a Priest with a total membership of twenty-eight persons.

The family resided during the children's youth, at Cockbar Station, near Croston and Ulnes Walton, about five miles south of Preston, Lancashire, England. The family remained here until February of 1852 when they gave up their residence in order to emigrate to America and join the Saints in the Salt Lake Valley

Preparations to come to America by the members in the branches of the church began years earlier when they began saving their funds , little by little, until necessary amounts were obtained for passage.. A ships passage for one individual in the year 1852 was approximately three pounds, five shillings, almost a half years wages for many. This great cost caused a severe hardship on many who were saving for the journey. It was for this reason that the perpetual emigration fund company was organized. In September of 1849, Brigham Young approved the creation of the company to administer a revolving cooperative to finance needy emigrants. This agency would collect donations of money, wagons, livestock, food and clothing from the Saints wherever they might be located. At the October Conference in Salt Lake City Heber C. Kimball presented the plan which was accepted by the membership. Before it was dissolved in 1887 the P.E.F. assisted about 50,000 persons including as many as one-half of the converts from foreign countries.

The cost of the ships passage for the Langston family as about sixteen pounds, five shillings. The Langton family included: James Langton, age 51, Ellen Langton, age 51; Mary Catherine, age 24, John, age 22, Robert, age 17, and James the son of Mary Catherine, age 2, The family paid a deposit of five pounds 2 February 1852.. They drew from the Emigration Fund Company the needed eleven pounds five shillings,

Seth Langton the 4th son did not come to America with the family as he had just married Sarah Swidenbank less than a month before on 12 January 1852. He,

his wife, and child came to America three years later on the ship "Siddons", which sailed for Philadelphia on 27 Feb. 1855.

The "Ellen Maria" was the name of the ship they were to leave on from Liverpool. The date it was supposed to leave was 6 February 1852 but for some unknown delay did not sail until 10 Feb. 1852. Amherst Whitmore was the captain of the "Ellen Maria".. Elder Isaac C. Haight was in charge of the 368 L.D.S. emigrants while they were on the sea voyage.

A few days out of Liverpool, a stowaway made an appearance, swelling the passenger list to 369 persons, 182 which were emigrating through the auspices of the first Perpetual Emigration Fund Company. Food provisions for passengers were mandated by British law but were hardly enforced. Food was often scanty but not sufficient to jeopardize the health. Every ship was supposed to provide each adult passenger with a weekly allowance of two and a half pounds of biscuit, a pound of flour, five pounds of oatmeal, two pounds of rice, two ounces of tea, half a pound of sugar and half a pound of molasses, five pounds of potatoes could be substituted for one pound of oatmeal or rice for an emigrant, securing a life sustaining supply of food was only half the battle; the other half was in trying to cook it. On most ships the cooking grates up on deck were too few for the people who needed to use them, When the weather was bad, the grates could not be used at all. The ships cook did the cooking for some steerage passengers at a price. Those who could bribe him could fare much better.

There was but one death during the voyage, that of an old lady. She was sewed up in a sheet with a large piece of coal tied to her feet, that was lowered into the ocean by sliding her off a smooth plank, feet first.

They landed at the mouth of the Mississippi River in the Gulf of Mexico on 12 April 1852. They got stuck on a sand bar and it was three days before a tug steamer came to haul them off. All sailing vessels had to be tugged up to New Orleans, a distance of 120 miles.

They lay waiting three days to be transferred to a river steamer. New Orleans at this time was the hub of an economy built on slavery, water traffic and cotton trade. New Orleans did not conceal the dirt nor protect its inhabitants from the sweltering heat, humidity, or most of all disease. Unsanitary conditions and mosquito breeding marshes produced recurring epidemics of cholera, which took its toll of the Mormons passing through on their way to the West.

After seven days aboard the river steamer on the Mississippi River they reached St. Louis the latter part of April having traveled by river 1100 miles. Elder Smoot and the 252 members of the Perpetual Emigration Fund Company then boarded the "St. Ange" a river steamer for the river trip from St. Louis to Kansas City where they arrived the first week of May 1852. Isaac Brockbank, one of the members wrote: "Brother Smoot thought it advisable to remain in Kansas City for sometime as the wagons which were being made in St. Louis were not near finished and might be several weeks before being placed at their disposal.. The 252 Saints had to be cared for and sheltered. To do this most of the company was taken to a point about three-fourths of a mile from the Missouri River on an elevation where they pitched their tents and were made as comfortable as circumstances would permit. It was here in this encampment where tragedy struck the Langton family and other saints in the party. The dreaded disease cholera broke out in the camp. Isaac Brockbank relates, "the brother and sisters having just got off the long sea voyage and dieted on hard tack, and the commonest kind of food, without any vegetables, proceeded to dig some roots they had been acquainted with in the old country. When they came to use these roots for food the cholera broke out. This was a very sad affair, here was a company of several hundred Saints temporarily located among a people who were hostile to the whole Mormon community and who made their boasts that they had assisted in driving the Saints across the river some years before and they were on hand to go through the same performance again. As the scourge in the camp increased, and the brethren and sisters were dying off, alarm spread through the surrounding country and the result was that indignation meetings were held and propositions made to have the Saints removed.

As the scourge continued they were afraid to go near the camp. It was in this hostile situation that James Langton, his wife Ellen and their two sons John and Robert all died from the cholera, leaving their daughter Mary Catherine and her two year old son James. This family died in the month of May 1852 and are presumed to be buried in Kansas City as graves along the way. Mary Catherine and her son did make it west.

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