

PETER SHEFFIELD

(1807 - 1865)

The homeland of our Sheffield ancestors is England. John Sheffield was born on the 6th of January 1768 in Carlisle, Cumberland, England, the son of Thomas Sheffield and Ann Carlisle. Thomas was a miller (one who ground grains). John Sheffield married Mary Garner on January 6, 1793. She was born on October 15, 1775 in Prescot, Lancashire, England, the daughter of Peter Garner and Margaret Swainson. Ten children were born to John and Mary:

Thomas	born 13 February 1794	in Prescot, Lancashire
Mary	born 17 July 1795	in Prescot
Ann	born 6 November 1798	in Prescot (died in Missouri)
Margaret	born 19 September 1800	in Bedford (died as an infant)
John Garner	born 6 March 1803	in Bedford (died in St. Louis)
Elizabeth	born 6 January 1805	in Bedford
Peter	born 24 January 1807	in Bedford (died in Tennessee)
William	born 14 August 1809	in Bedford (died as an infant)
Ellen	born 25 January 1811	in Bedford
James	born 25 December 1814	in Bedford

Bedford was a small agricultural town and market center where wool and lace and brewing were important industries. The town, located about 50 miles north of London, is situated in a fertile valley on both sides of the River Ouse. In 1850, the population of the community was about 11,500. Here John worked as a currier (one who dresses leather after it is tanned) and shoemaker.

This is where the Mormon missionaries found the Sheffield family in 1838, only eight years after the Church was organized. Son John Garner (born 1803) was the first to be baptized, in January 1838 by Willard Richards. He became president of the Bedford England Branch. John baptized his brother Peter in September 1841 and Peter baptized their father, John, at age 82 in April 1850. No record can be found of Mary Garner Sheffield being baptized before her death in 1854 though there is a strong possibility that she was.

John died at age 87, five years after he joined the Church. His wife, Mary, passed away one year earlier. John Garner and his brother Peter were stalwarts and leaders in the Church as it grew in the Bedford and Wellingborough areas. John was the branch president in Bedford; Peter, the presiding officer in Wellingborough. In 1847 Peter represented the Wellingborough Branch of 48 members at the Bedford Conference of the Church. Of the six living Sheffield children, it appears that three came to America. Ann came in 1854 after her

husband, Henry Fowles, passed away; she died in Missouri. John and wife Sarah emigrated in 1843 with four children: Susanna, Peter, Alfred, and Mary Ann and were in St. Louis when John died in 1856. Their son John (born 7 December 1823 in Bedford) married Zilpah Noble. Family records indicate that John and Zilpah were enroute to Utah in 1855 when she was kidnapped by the Indians and never found and he was killed while searching for her.

Peter spent his growing up years in Bedford receiving little formal education but learning the trade of shoemaking. In December 1824 at the age of 17 he married Charlotte Mundin from nearby Wellingborough who was also 17. They had three children:

Ellen (Helen)	born 29 June 1826
Mary Ann	born 30 August 1828
James	born 22 May 1830

Charlotte died on December 30, 1830 only seven months after James, the third child, was born. Two years later on Christmas day 1832, Peter married Ann Swales. She was a widow from Wellingborough and was a wonderful mother to the children (ages 6, 4, and 2) until her untimely death only a year later. In the 1841 census Peter is living on High Street in Wellingborough, was age 35 with the following individuals listed in his household: Helen (Ellen) age 14, Mary Ann age 13, James age 10, Eli Swales age 15, and Maria Perrin, a female servant, age 50.

On December 25, 1843 Peter married a third time to 28-year-old Elizabeth Knight. She gave birth to a son, Charles Nephi, on December 2, 1844. About three weeks after his birth, the day after Christmas in 1844, Elizabeth died. Peter, having buried three wives and still only 37 years of age, now had four children ages 18, 16, 14, and the new baby. He apparently didn't marry again until the age of 42 when he married his fourth wife, Deborah Day Franks, on February 18, 1849, the same day she was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

On September 4, 1850, Peter (age 43), Deborah (age 35) and Charles Nephi (age 5), left Liverpool on the ship the "North Atlantic" which was sailing to New Orleans. A total of 357 LDS immigrants made that voyage under the direction of Captain Cook. After a rather lengthy, but safe passage the company arrived in New Orleans on November 1, 1850. There were two deaths on board, two births, and one baptism. From New Orleans the emigrants continued their journey up the Mississippi River to St. Louis. Where exactly Peter settled upon his arrival in America has not been determined, but in 1854 he was in St. Louis when his daughter Ellen and her husband Samuel Barson arrived there from England. Why Peter Sheffield never came to the Salt Lake Valley is not known. He apparently had established a successful tannery in St. Louis where he was also branch president of a congregation of saints. Perhaps this accounts for him remaining in the Midwest rather than traveling on to Utah. Peter apparently later went to Tennessee for it is understood that he died there on August 4, 1865 and is buried in Linden, Perry, Tennessee. Years later, we find Peter's son, Charles Nephi Sheffield, and posterity in Kentucky.

All three of Peter's older children were baptized: James in 1840; Ellen and Mary Ann in September 1841. After joining the church, family members suffered many hardships and persecution. In 1933 Heber James Sheffield wrote a paper entitled "Sheffield Progenitors, Martyrs for Their Faith." He wrote:

The occupation of tanners and shoemakers were followed by them. After their becoming members of the Church, they were discharged from shoe building jobs a number of times because they had joined what the boss called the despised Mormons. They chose this scoffing and abuse rather than shrink from the truths they needs must think. Grandmother, Sarah Adelaide (Wilmer) Sheffield (wife of James born 1830 who was the son of Peter Sheffield) was driven from home by her parents (her father) because she joined the Latter-day Saints, and was forbidden to ever enter their home again. Many a night she crept to the window of the home just to get a glimpse of her father and mother and other members of the family.

At another time when her husband, James Sheffield, had been discharged because of this church affiliation and could not find employment, because of her children crying for food to eat, she endeavored to seek employment and was asked by her oldest brother, John Wilmer, to come and work for him. This opportunity she readily accepted, and with a glad heart she went through the day's work. The day's work done she looked forward to the time for her brother to come in and make settlement. Mr. Wilmer had been reminded that he was entertaining a Mormon, so he refused to pay for the labor or given them food to eat and sent them from his home into the cold.

The Lord provided friends for these relatives. A man by the name of John Wimpres, who married grandmother's sister (Jane or Ann Wilmer) took them into his home, warmed and fed them, giving them plain but satisfying food. So impressed was he with the thankfulness displayed, he told them they could remain at his home and be cared for by him until grandfather had obtained employment. John Wimpres was blessed by the Lord for his kindness and was prospered, while John Wilmer was not prospered and died in poverty. Through all of these trying circumstances the faith of my ancestry was not shaken, and they lived and died good faithful Latter-day Saints true to the truth.

James Sheffield, his wife Sarah Adelaide Wilmer, and their five children came to Utah in 1873 and settled in Kaysville. Peter's daughter, Mary Ann, married Thomas Moon and stayed in England. Daughter Ellen, wife of Samuel Barson, left England in February 1854 with her husband and two children (Peter age 5 and Mary Ann age 2) on the ship Windermere under Captain J.W. Fairfield en route to New Orleans. At New Orleans they boarded a steamship headed for St. Louis. After the cholera epidemic in 1849 a permanent quarantine

station had been set up on Arsenal Island in the Mississippi. All visitors to St. Louis were required to be examined before they could continue into the city. Residences were set up on the island to provide temporary housing. It is most likely here that Ellen died of cholera. According to a letter written by Samuel to his family back in England, they landed at Quarantine Island where Ellen became very sick and ill with cholera. She died and was buried there. Peter, her father, was in St. Louis to greet them and was with Ellen at the time of her death on May 15, 1854. Samuel and son Peter went on to the Salt Lake Valley leaving little Mary Ann (2 years old) with her grandfather, Peter Sheffield, in St. Louis. Word was received later that Mary Ann had died also.

These faithful progenitors suffered much because of their faith. Many endured ridicule, hatred, persecution, loss of jobs, expulsion from their homes, severance of old friendships, and death. Through all of these trying circumstances their faith was not shaken; they lived and died good faithful Latter-day Saints.

Much of the information in this history was taken from the book Sheffield Family - History of a Noble Ancestry by Sherman Beck Sheffield; call number at the Salt Lake Family History Center 929.273SH39. See also Sheffield Family Genealogy: A Companion Volume to the above book with the same call number.