

# Robert Brown

15 September 1816 – 13 May 1884



For centuries, mankind has had a fascination with the sea. It is mysterious, ominous, beautiful, and unpredictable. It offered hope, promised adventure, and rewarded those who braved its dangers. It's not hard to love the sea, or to dream about its secrets. Many have – Robert Brown among them.

Robert Brown was born on September 15, 1816 in Boreland, Fife County, Scotland. He was the son of George Woodward Brown and Marian Adamson. At the age of 21 he married Elizabeth Beveridge on November 4, 1837 at Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland. Elizabeth was born on September 23, 1815 in Halbeth, Fife, Scotland. She was the daughter of David Beveridge and Janet Muir. At first Robert and Elizabeth made their home in Rawyards, Lanark County, Scotland. Their first children, twins Janet and David, were born in about December 1838 but died as infants. Their next child, George, who was born in 1839 also died as small child. After having and losing three children, Janet was born on October 27, 1841. Then on July 2, 1844 Christina and her twin sister, Marion, were born in Halbeath, Fife, Scotland.

Robert loved the sea. He had sailed to South America with a load of coal. He had been gone for 14 months and everyone thought that the ship had foundered and was lost. To their great surprise, one day it sailed into port. They had a big celebration to welcome them home. Robert had nearly lost his life in the storm. The sea was so rough, it jerked the helm from his grasp and dashed him against the railing and knocked him unconscious and broke his nose. He was found lying in a pool of blood and unconscious so they had to get another man to take his place. By the time the storm was over, it had swept the deck clean of masts, rigging, and everything above deck.

They made it into a port where the ship was repaired before sailing for home. After that, he gave up the sea for a family life with Elizabeth. He then went to work in the coal mines.

While living in Hallbeath, Robert and Elizabeth were taught the gospel by Elder Peacock from Mann, Utah and were baptized into the Mormon Church: Robert on August 29, 1846 and Elizabeth more than a year later on September 13, 1847.

The family moved often as Robert was constantly changing jobs. When he found a better job he would start immediately and quit his old job without leaving notice. He would tell his wife, Elizabeth, to have things packed and he would send for her and the children to join him. At one point, he was injured in an accident and was unable to work for a while. As they moved around, wherever his jobs took him. They lived in Bridgeness, Kircaldy, and then Cowdenbaith, During this time, four more children were born; Elizabeth who was born and died in 1846, David on April 8, 1847, Robert Jr. on October 20, 1850, and Elizabeth on November 17, 1854.

Their older children grew up and began getting married. Marion married Archibald Dunsire on January 4, 1861. Janet married Thomas Adamson later that same year on May 19, 1861. In 1863 Janet and her husband and Christina emigrated to America and crossed the plains to Utah. Robert and Elizabeth missed them so much and longed to join them. They both worked hard to save enough money to go to America. Finally, nearly ten years after first joining the church, they were able to come to America.

Leaving Marion and her family behind, the Browns traveled to London. On May 23, 1866 Robert (49), Elizabeth (50), David (19), Robert, Jr. (15), and Elizabeth (11) boarded the sailing ship "American Congress" bound for New York.

The ship with 350 saints on board, cleared from the London Docks, on the 23rd of May. Late in the afternoon the vessel moved from her berth into the Shadwell Basin. A meeting was held on board and the usual organization was put in place. Elder John Nicholson was appointed president, Elders Joshua K. Whitney and John Rider, were his counselors. Early on the morning of the 24th, the vessel was

taken in tow by a steam-tug, and moved down the river to Gravesend and put out to sea.

With Robert's love for the sea, it must have been a joy to him to be at sea once again, only this time as a passenger. Undoubtedly he surely must have lent a hand here and there and swapped sea stories with the crew.

The ship encountered some rough weather, and had a lot of contrary wind to contend with. There was but very little sickness, and no deaths occurred on the voyage, which was quite remarkable with so many aboard. After a long and tiresome voyage, they arrived in New York Harbor on the morning of July 4<sup>th</sup>. As that was a holiday, they had to remain on board until the next day. They had a splendid view of the fireworks that night from the ship as it lay in the harbor.

The next day the Saints moved their belongings up on deck. After being cleared by the government officials who came aboard, they were taken to Castle Garden in New York where the passengers were all required to have their names registered according to law. They were then taken further up the Hudson River to Albany, New York and in the evening boarded a train that crossed into Canada on the way to Chicago. At Quincy, Illinois they crossed the Mississippi River and traveled across Missouri and arrived at St. Joseph on Friday the 13th of July. At St. Joseph, they went on board a steamboat and steamed up the Missouri River to the outfitting post at Wyoming, Nebraska on the west bank of the Missouri River about 40 miles south of Omaha.

There they had a few days of rest before proceeding on. Waiting for them were wagons, ox teams, and teamsters from the Salt Lake Valley. On July 24, 1866 about 500 individuals and 84 wagons were in the company when it began its journey. During the first day they traveled eight miles. With the wagons loaded with belongings and provisions, everyone that was able had to walk. They continued traveling west at about 15 or 20 miles each day, but some days had to drive farther to find suitable watering places. They had to gather what wood they could find but burned buffalo chips most of the time. As they traveled the Mormon Trail up the north side of the Platte River, they were inspected in several places by U.S. Government officers.

They had a prosperous trip and there was not much sickness. Many had formed acquaintances on shipboard and stuck together. Every night the wagons were arranged in such a manner to form a corral when they camped for the night. One half of the train would make a circle to the right and the other half would circle to the left which formed a hollow circle. The inside of the wagon circle was used as a corral for the cattle with the wagon tongues on the outside. The food was prepared on campfires on the outside of the circle. To prepare against Indian attacks the men had to stand guard about every third night around the camp and the cattle. It was quite tiring when your turn came to stand guard after walking all day.

Sometimes river crossings were very dangerous. The Platte River was between one to four feet deep and about a mile to a mile and a half wide. The river bottom tended to be covered with quick sand, so they had to join hands and wade across. With fifty people in a line, the stronger ones could help the weaker ones. After many ups and downs, and many trials, they arrived in Salt Lake City on September 29, 1866 in fair condition, having been traveling for just over four months since leaving Scotland.

Upon their arrival in the Valley, they were greeted by Janet and her family who were living in Salt Lake, including two new grandchildren. Christina had married Mortimer Wilson Warner soon after her arrival in Utah and was living in Fillmore, about one hundred and forty five miles south of Salt Lake City. Christina presented her parents with one grandchild and was expecting another.

Robert and Elizabeth stayed in Salt Lake City for a while where he went to work building the tabernacle which was under construction at that time. After being in Salt Lake for a short while, the Browns moved to Greenville in Beaver County about sixty miles south of Fillmore, far, far away from the sea.

In Greenville they finished raising their family. Their 21 year old son, David, died on March 23, 1869. Elizabeth, their youngest daughter, married James Mills Paxton in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City on October 4, 1869 and settled in Kanosh, Millard County where Christina and her family had moved to. Also in 1869, Robert and Elizabeth were sealed in the Endowment House on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

In 1872, their daughter, Marion, arrived in Utah from Scotland and settled in Cedar City. Then Robert, Jr. married Mary Davies on September 23, 1872 in Greenville where they made their home.

By then Robert was 56 years old. Robert and Elizabeth spent the rest of their lives in Greenville. Elizabeth died on April 8, 1884 at the age of 68. Less than six weeks later, Robert died of dropsy on May 13, 1884 at the age of 67. (*Dropsy is n old term for the swelling of soft tissues due to the accumulation of excess fluid.*) He was laid to rest two days later in the Greenville Cemetery next to Elizabeth.

*Sources of information:*

*Part of this story comes from an uncredited life story of Christina Brown Warner, most likley by Lavina Warner Alger. Other pieces come from a brief uncredited life sketch of Elizabeth Beveridge Brown found on page 382 in Pioneer Women of Faith and Foritude Volume 1 published by The Daughters of Utah Pioneers.*

*The voyage of the American Congress and the journey to Wyoming, Nebraska are from journal exerts found at <http://www.lib.byu.edu/mormonmigration/voyage.php?id=21&q=American%20Congress>*

Some details of crossing the plains are from journal exerts found at <http://lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysources/1,16272,4019-1-304,00.html>