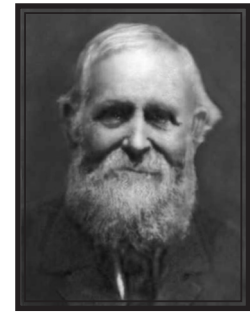


THOMAS YOUNG

Born: 8 Feb 1836 England
 Age: 20
 Willie Handcart Company



Thomas Young's sister, Lucy, wrote about Thomas's conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England:

When Tom became interested in Mormonism, Father said he would rather bury him than see him become a Mormon. Then when Tom did join the Church and was determined to go to America, Father relented and said, "Don't leave us, Tom, I'll let you go to your meetings and have any of the people here." Tom answered, "I'm not satisfied. I can't stay here. I want to go to the gathering place of the Saints. When you join the Church, as you will, you will know why. Don't grieve too much, Father, for you will see me again." Father clung to the promise with the thought that perhaps Tom would come back there on a mission.

Father met with several severe accidents and one time he had serious throat trouble and had to breathe through a tube. The doctor told him he would have to be very careful or he might lose his life and Father said, "Don't talk to me of dying. I have a son in America who promised me I would see him again and I haven't yet and I know I will."

Eighteen years later, Father and Mother came to Utah and Tom's promise was realized and what a glorious meeting it was. Tom had built a little two-room home in the orchard for them near him and they lived there the remainder of their lives.

Mother was very bitter against a Church that would take her boy away from her and she was unhappy and sad for some time until finally she decided she would visit the Church and see just what they taught that would take a boy from his family. She went with a very antagonistic spirit and was greeted by the Presiding Elder who was a neighbor and he said, "Well, Ann, I am glad to see you, come and sit down," to which mother replied, "I don't think much of a religion that would persuade a boy to leave his folks and go away to a far country." He again said he was glad to see her and here perhaps she would find the reason why her boy had gone to America.

She said she was glad to get away from that meeting but two weeks later she went again and against her will received a testimony of the Gospel and at the close of the meeting told the Presiding Elder she was ready for baptism and soon she too became a member and she said from that time England was no more her home though 18 years passed before she was able to immigrate to Utah.

She did enjoy her little home in Three Mile Creek[, Utah] as it was then called and for many years she was a Sunday School teacher. And many many years later one of her pupils said he remembered her as a very good teacher and he laughingly added, "And sometimes she would bring dried fruit for us to eat while she gave the lesson." Another pupil said, "She was so kind and often would take two of us home to dinner on Sunday and we were so happy when it came our turn to go to her home and have dinner with our Sunday School teacher." Just a week before she passed away she ran a foot race with some of her pupils.

Shortly after Thomas's mother joined the Church, his father and all but one of his nine siblings also joined and eventually came to Utah. Thomas's oldest sister, Sarah, had looked on Thomas as her favorite brother and was very bitter about his newfound faith. Lucy wrote: "When the Elders would come to our home she would leave and said she never wanted anything to do with a religion that would persuade her loved brother to leave home and go so far away. ... She never did accept the Gospel or overcome her animosity."

Thomas's brother, Samuel, also wrote of the family:

Tom was a very serious boy and never seemed to care to play marbles or any games. He would go out and watch the other boys for awhile, then go in the house and read or study. He went to school parts of two summers. The book they studied was the New Testament. Later he resumed his education at night school. ... Tom was always of a religious turn of mind and ... he knew Mormonism was the truth when he first heard it and became a member at the age of 19 and soon after was ordained a Priest. Tom and I were almost inseparable and I was more lonesome when he left for America than I was two years later when I came to America and left the remainder of the family.

Thomas Young wrote his autobiography and history of travel in the Willie handcart company in 1915, the year prior to his death at age 80. The following are excerpts from that autobiography:

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I was born on February 8, 1836, at Upper Caldicott, near Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, England. I was the son of George Young and Anne Willshire Young. I was the grandson of Thomas Young and Sarah Humphries, and James Willshire. I do not know my [other] grandmother's maiden name. [He later learned that it was Jane Silby.]

I was baptized into the Church on February 5, 1855, and confirmed the same day. Samuel Wagstaff baptised me; I was confirmed by John Sears. I immigrated to Utah in 1856, leaving England in the middle of February (18, 1855) . I landed in New York on March 27, 1856. I crossed the sea in the ship "Caravan" and reached St. Louis on April 5, 1856, by railroad. I secured work on a farm and worked until the first of August, then left [Missouri] to get ready to cross the plains.

We began our great adventure on August 8 [The Willie Company was near Council Bluffs, Iowa, across the Missouri River from Florence, Nebraska, at this time. The Abraham Smoot Company was still in Missouri.] and reached Salt Lake City on November 9. I walked all the way and drove an ox team for Abraham Smoot, father of Reed Smoot. We came in the Captain James Willie Company.¹ There were five hundred people, one hundred twenty hand carts, five wagons, twenty-four oxen and forty-five beef cattle. When we reached Florence [Nebraska Territory] there were several days delay on account of the handcarts. We mended old carts, made new ones, and obtained supplies.

We had many thrilling experiences crossing the plains, and some that made it very hard for our company. One was the Indians driving off our beef cattle. There was an extremely early winter that year and no one had warm enough clothing nor enough bedding to keep warm. The handcarts were so rickety that it took rawhide a plenty to tie them together. The provisions were so low that on October 12 every one was rationed out with ten ounces of flour. On the nineteenth [of October] the snow began to fall and fell eighteen inches deep on the level. We pushed on as far as we could but were forced to make camp on the Sweet Water. ...

[When] Brigham Young learned of [us] in the October conference[,] he dismissed the conference and sent twenty wagons, each with two teamsters, provisions, quilts and all kinds of supplies that had been volunteered to aid our company and others who were on the plains. Two men were sent ahead to let the Saints know that help was coming and to encourage them. Help came just in time; we had had nothing to eat for forty-eight hours. Nine of our company died the night help came. When we reached the valley, one sixteenth of our company had been left buried by the wayside.

I stayed with Brigham H. Young, son of Brigham Young, one year – driving a team of mules, hauling wood from the canyon, then I married Martha Webb Campkin. We had crossed in the James Willie Company. Her husband died of pneumonia while we were in St. Louis, leaving her with five small children to care for. Before he died he asked me if I would see they reached their destination.

Now being a married man, I started out for myself. In July 1857, I was ordained by Elder Joseph Young, brother to Brigham Young. About this time I joined the Nauvoo Legion, and we used to train every Saturday afternoon as we heard there was an army of soldiers coming to kill us and burn our homes. I enlisted in Colonel I.D. Ross' Co., H.D. Park was captain, and I was Lieutenant. We had some [enjoyable] times.

About the middle of October, we were called to shoulder our guns and go out to meet the soldiers and stop them from coming into the valley. We loosened great boulders, and had rocks of various sizes stacked available. A few men could roll these rocks down upon the army as it crossed through the narrow canyon pass. We went to Echo Canyon, and stayed there for six weeks. Then we heard they couldn't come in 'til spring, so we went back home for the winter.

In the Spring of 1858, we were told to pack up our things and go south and not stop short of Lehi, twenty-five miles south of Salt Lake City. I went about thirty miles, stopping one night on the way. It rained very hard and five families had to stay in one old cellar all one night. The mud leaked through. The next morning we were a sorry looking sight but glad that it was no worse. Starting out the next morning, we went to American Fork where we stayed till the first of August 1858. Then we were told we could return.

I went to Bountiful, and worked for Israel Barlowe in 1859. Here our first child, a daughter we named Fannie, was born. In the Spring of 1860 I moved to Three Mile Creek, later called Perry. I arrived on the 9th of April and lived on James Neilson's old farm. Henry Tingey bought it from a man named Allen. I lived there one year then moved to a place called the Stauffer farm. I sold it to Richard Thorne, and went to live in a house a little above Barnard White's house. [Barnard White traveled in the Hunt wagon company in 1856. See Elizabeth White in Hunt company section of *Tell My Story, Too*.]

I worked for Mr. Thorne for two years, and then bought another place and moved there on March 1, 1864. This was the time of the Civil War when green backs were worth only fifty cents on the dollar so I had to pay fifteen hundred dollars in gold or double that in green backs. I had three years to pay for it at five hundred dollars a year. All

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I had to start with was one yoke of oxen. He took them for one hundred dollars. Now I had a farm but no team to work with so concluded I would make a pasture of it and rent another farm to work. So I rented the farm Mr. Hansen had, but a Mr. Perry owned it, then Heber Perry's grandfather. I do not know that I ever learned his given name [Henry Elisha Perry, whose son, Henry, later married Thomas' oldest daughter]. ...

The first year I made the payment alright and had a few dollars to spare with which I bought some calves so as to have something to help with the next year's payment, which I also made all right. It took all I had to make the next year's payment. I had only a "Squatters" right, no title to the land.

When the land came into market in 1865, I had to go and buy it all over again from the government at a dollar and fifty cents cash down and no grumbling. ...

There was only one log room on the place, the south one. I bought the north one, and had it shingled, as there was only boards and dirt roof on it. It leaked every time it stormed. After a while I added two more rooms at the back and built a big rock cellar on the north.

After my family grew up I built a six room adobe house just east of the log one. I accepted the principle of plural marriage, marrying Harriet Campkin. The [federal] marshals caused a great many trials and hardships. Many times the men would have to quit work to keep out of their way. But I, with many others, was convicted of polygamy and served six months in the state penitentiary at Salt Lake City. ... I was soon let out as a trustee to work on the penitentiary farm.

Then I divided my farm into three pieces. Each wife and I drew separate portions, Harriet getting the piece with the house. By building the house and buying fine bred cattle, I became involved in a debt for three thousand dollars. Each piece of property was to assume one thousand dollars of the debt. I let my property go to satisfy creditors and went south of Salt Lake for several years. In the meantime both of my wives had died.

I married Lily May Andrus and went to Lewiston, buying a piece of ground near the schoolhouse. I planted fruit trees and raised strawberries and sugar beets to pay for my small place. I also served as janitor for the schoolhouse part of the time. I lived in Lewiston for fifteen years and after my third wife died I came to live with my son, Wallace. I was the father of seven children, three sons and four daughters. Fannie, Thomas, and Albert being born to my first wife, Martha Webb Campkin. Then Eliza, Wallace, Ida, and Sarah were the children born to my second wife, Harriet Campkin, daughter of my first wife, Martha Webb Campkin.

Lillian Knight summarized the family's admiration for Thomas Young in these words: "We descendants are grateful that this lad of 19 had the faith and courage to unite with the misunderstood Mormons and the determination to come to America and thus lead the way ... for [his parents' family] to come and enjoy the blessings and privileges of living the remainder of their lives in these Valleys of the Rocky Mountains[;] for us to be born and live in this 'Choice above all other lands: America.' "

Thomas Young left a great posterity to honor his name. Among them are Thomas and Martha Webb Campkin's great-grandson, Apostle L. Tom Perry (1922-2015).

Sources: 1) Four transcripts of the "Autobiography of Thomas Young" with various small differences in each. However, all indicate the original writing was by Thomas Young. The whereabouts of an original handwritten autobiography is unknown at this time. Three transcripts were typed respectively by descendants Lillian J. Knight, Shirley Larsen, and Rosa Young. The fourth typist is unnamed. Rosa Young was the wife of Thomas's son, Wallace, with whom Thomas lived the last few years of his life. He was in Wallace and Rosa's home in 1915 when he "penned" this account. 2) Daughters of Utah Pioneers history file on Thomas Young. Submission by Lillian J. Knight includes Rosa Young's interviews with Thomas's siblings, Samuel Young and Lucy Young Woodward. 3) Interviews with various descendants of Thomas Young by Jolene Allphin. 4) Research by Jolene Allphin on teamsters or "drivers" for Abraham O. Smoot's 1856 wagon train and Smoot wagons.



Martha Webb Campkin
(Young)



Harriet Campkin
(Young)