

Written by a great-granddaughter of Mary McMurrin Lee:

In the October 1972 Ensign is an account about the eleventh prophet of the church Harold B. Lee. The talk is entitled "Having Been Born of Goodly Parents." It was given by S. Dillworth Young. It speaks about how my great grandmother took care of Harold B. Lee's father when he was born to her sister Margaret who had died in childbirth. He was the twelfth child she had given birth to and the only one who lived. She died eight days later. The poem and the thoughts are powerful. This talk was given four months after I had married. The story of the Lee's is one of bravery, courage, and determination to endure to the end. Mary and her sister Margaret crossed the plains with their parents as little girls. Mary and her husband Francis Columbus Lee were the parents of my maternal grandfather James Irvin Lee.

Conference Talk by S. Dillworth Young from the October 1972 Ensign

While we realize that we shall have close association with Elder Bruce R. McConkie in our future work with the missions of the Church and shall partake of his wisdom and spirituality, we also know that we shall miss him more than any of us care to admit. We assure him of our love, our loyalty, and our support.

We also welcome Elder Rex D. Pinegar to our council and feel certain that his ability will add strength to us as we go forward.

I shall speak about genealogy.

William Lee came from the old sod in 1745. He must have had an unexplained urge, because he would not know really why he came. He might think it was to better his condition.

He fought in the American Revolution and was wounded. Many of us have ancestors who are reported to have fought in the Revolution, but few of them were wounded. This man was left for dead in the battle of Guilford County Courthouse in the Carolinas in March 1781. Thanks to good nursing he recovered and, as in all good endings, married his nurse. Four sons came to him, one of whom was Samuel, who was the youngest.

Samuel's sons, Francis, Alfred, and Eli, and their families joined the Church in 1832, about the time that my great-grandfather joined. They suffered through all the vicissitudes and the troubles and persecutions and mobbings of Jackson County, Far West, and Nauvoo, and finally came west. At Winter Quarters their father joined them. He had not joined the Church until this time but joined shortly afterward. Francis married a young woman by the name of Jane Vail Johnson. I shall speak of her later.

They all came to Utah and settled in Tooele County. They were just

getting settled and making things go when they were called by President Brigham Young to St. George, and they went, like all good Latter-day Saints did in those days. But they had not been in St. George very long when they were called to settle in Meadow Valley. That is a place you folks probably have not heard about. It is now known as Panaca, in what they thought was southwestern Utah, but which actually later came to be Nevada. These people, obeying the call, again without question, were the first family to move to Meadow Valley, and they made a dugout house. Sister Young said that you may not know what a dugout house is. I replied that most of the folks would know: One digs a cubical hole in a hillside and covers it with a roof of wooden poles topped with clay.

Troubles of the few settlers with the Indians caused the authorities in St. George to give them permission to abandon the project, but Sister Jane Johnson Lee refused to leave. She said she was there to stay, and stay they did. Later two Indians came into her dugout home, and one of them, seeing a rifle in one corner of the room, demanded it. Sister Lee refused to give it to him. He started for the gun, but she struck him so hard with a piece of stove wood, it knocked him down. He staggered to his feet and drew his bow, aiming the arrow at her. She let him have another piece of wood, which smashed the bow and arrow. Both Indians departed.

Two sons of this brave couple married sisters. Samuel Marion Lee married Margaret McMurrin, and Francis Lee, Jr., married Mary McMurrin. The McMurrins were converts from Scotland who had crossed the plains with the handcart companies. Brother McMurrin, a cooper, which is a man who makes barrels and bends wood, repaired many a handcart wheel en route, which helped get the carts to the valley but delayed him and his family. They also settled in Tooele. Each of the Lee brothers took his bride to Meadow Valley.

I speak of Margaret's bravery.

Eleven times she placed
Her life upon the block
And offered it that
Children might be born.
No sterile chamber
Where the doctor waits,
The anesthetic cone
And nurse in readiness,
Could be her lot.
The cabin walls absorbed
The agonizing cries,
With Death close by.
He did not claim her life.
Instead he took each child—
Each little one to heaven—
All eleven.
Then came the twelfth.

For her the light burned dim, then flickered low,
And out—
But she had filled her life, and
Given all that she could give.
Her mission was performed;
A son was born,
The only child to live.
He was named his father's name—
Samuel Lee.

Mary McMurrin Lee took the child and let him nurse along with her own child, but after a time the strain was too great, so they took the baby to Salt Lake City to Grandmother McMurrin.

"I'll give him one last nursing," she said, and then laying him in his crib, she went back to Meadow Valley.

Under his grandmother's care the baby Samuel grew into a stalwart boy, and when sixteen went to Clifton, Idaho, in Cache Valley, where he worked on a farm and there later met Louisa Bingham.

The Bingham family, stalwart in the faith, were pioneers. They endured the hardships of the plains and the difficulties of conquering the new land. They were among the early settlers of Clifton.

Out on the farm
Louisa Bingham
Grew and blossomed
Into girlish womanhood.
Her eyes
Caught the color of the
Somber hills in spring,
And in the fall they
Danced with joy
At autumn's coloring.
At home she learned
To wash and cook and sew.
And winter
Saw her
Skating, sledding, and
Riding in the bobsleigh
Through the snow.
Then Samuel Lee, now
Working on this nearby farm,
Watched her grow,
Saw with his heart
As well as with his eyes
The slow unfolding
Of her girlish charm,
The bloom of girlhood
High upon her cheeks,

A budding woman,
Gentle, soft, and warm.
And she saw him,
The young, strong, steady hands,
The head well set,
The shoulders square
And broad,
The muscles strong
And firm,
A good young man.
She knew his story well—
The twelfth and only child
Which lived.
And so they came together,
Drawn by a magnet
Neither one could see,
To be the parents of a
Man of destiny.

And so, in good time, and in his turn, there came into the family circle on a windy day in late March 1899 a son. They named him Harold Bingham Lee.

It is fitting this day that we speak briefly of this heritage. The Lord prepared the lineage through which President Lee came that he might inherit their bravery, their loyalty, their integrity, and their devotion to the truth.

Twenty-five hundred and seventy-two years ago, give or take a year, a prophet accepted of the Lord began to write his history: "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents. ..." And then he went on to say, "I make a record of my proceedings in my days." (1 Ne. 1:1.)

And so the first prophet of our times might have said the same words: "I, Joseph Smith, having been born of goodly parents ... make my record."

And now, so it is today. Beginning his work as the prophet of the Lord, this modern seer and revelator may thus also begin his history: "I, Harold Bingham Lee, having been born of goodly parents, begin my work." Prophets are born of goodly parents. Before the earth was formed the heavenly hosts gave shouts of joy, both because they could come to the earth and that their leaders were chosen and recognized.

Those of us who are parents have children who may become prophets or sons of prophets. Let us raise them in truth and in virtue.

Said the Lord: "Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born." (Abr. 3:23.) And the Lord designated the others who have been chosen. I do not presume; rather, I am sure, President Lee,

thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

I pray that the whisperings of the Spirit, the visions of eternity, the mighty words of Christ our Lord will come to and be with you, even as they were with Nephi and with Joseph Smith. And I pray too that the disloyal and the disobedient will lose their power to hurt or make afraid.

I know that President Lee is a prophet and a seer and a revelator. I have seen with my own eyes the mantle fall upon him and have had a witness borne into my soul that the Lord has chosen him and sustains him.

God our Father, through his Son, Jesus Christ, directs the work of this the true and living church established by the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth. I know it, and bear witness of it, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.