

BIOGRAPHY OF DAVID SAUNDERS LAUGHLIN

Compiled by Lillian Myrle Roberts, January 1958

David Saunders Laughlin¹ was born on April 26, 1814 in New Hampshire, probably in or near Hillsborough County, since the 1790 Census shows four families by the name of Laughlin residing in that county of New Hampshire, and only in that county in the year 1790.

He joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at an early age in Kirtland, Ohio and afterwards moved to Far West, Missouri. It was during this time that he met and married Mary Clark, who was born in April of 1821. They moved to Nauvoo, Illinois with the Saints, where Mary passed away July 14, 1845 at the age of 24 years, 2 months and 3 days, of fever (according to the Nauvoo records)².

David Laughlin was with the Saints when they were driven from Nauvoo by the mobs. On July 16, 1846 he enlisted in the Mormon Battalion as a private in Company D with Nelson Higgins as Captain. Illness overtook David during the long, arduous march of the Battalion and at Santa Fe (New Mexico) he was transferred to Captain James Brown's sick detachment that was sent to Pueblo (Colorado) for the winter.

John Steele's account of the Pueblo detachment's movements back to Utah from their winter's quarters states, in part,

"We are now 145 miles from Pueblo, and we are informed that Sergeant Shelton has lost all his horses. We passed four trading houses and found six pound cannon there. June 5th, crossed over the Platte, came nine miles and camped on its banks. Sergeant picked up ten head of cows and sold them, one to David Laughlin for \$20.00 and one to Captain Brown for \$13.50."

The detachment reached the Salt Lake Valley (Utah) July 29, 1847 being met by President Brigham Young and many of the Saints with joyful greeting. On August 26, 1847 David Laughlin was with the large party, many of them members of the Mormon Battalion, that was headed by President Brigham Young and the Apostles that left Salt Lake Valley to return to Winter Quarters (Nebraska).

He left Winter Quarters as a missionary to Ohio, and it was while he was on this mission that he met my great-grandmother, Julia Ann Rocker Knapp. She was living in Cleveland, Ohio at the time and had recently been deserted by her

¹ NOTE: There has been a great deal of confusion of the names for David Saunders Laughlin, also known as David Sanders Lauchlin and Locklin. This confusion can be no doubt explained by the name being spelled in various places in the manner in which it was oft times pronounced.

² If her death date and record are accurate then her birth date is May 11, 1821.

husband, Martin Knapp, a man many years her senior in age. Their daughter, Louisa Knapp, was only about a year old, having been born March 4, 1846.



David Laughlin converted Julia Ann Rocker Knapp to the gospel and they were married, probably in late 1849 or early 1850. She was born Julia Ann Bercier, which later was Julia Ann Rocker.

Tragedy struck the family, when in January 1851, twin boys, Jacob and Joseph were born to live only a few hours and then pass away. The following March 7, 1852 John Saunders Laughlin was born and the family came west with a wagon train of Saints, settling at Cottonwood. It was here that young Julia Ann Laughlin was born on September 19, 1853. The small family then moved to Cedar Valley where Harriet was born on July 3, 1855.

David's health was failing rapidly and on December 5, 1856, after a long illness, he passed away, being only forty years of age. "Before his death he made Julia Ann, his devoted wife, promise to marry Bishop Henry Freeman Cook, in order that Bishop Cook could take care of her and their four small children, for he counted young Louisa Knapp as one of his own.

Throughout his life, which had been one of hardship, persecution, tragedy and illness, he maintained his devotion to the gospel and his testimony of its truthfulness.

Before Julia Ann's marriage to Bishop Cook (as his second wife) which was solemnized March 12, 1857, she was sealed to David S. Laughlin with Bishop Cook standing as proxy for the sealing.

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