

# Stevenson – Vickers Family History

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## John and Mary Vickers Stevenson

Our Stevenson ancestors originated so far as we know in Derbyshire, England, a small county in north central England, bordered on the north by Yorkshire, on the east by Nottinghamshire, on the south by Leicestershire, and on the west by Staffordshire and Cheshire.

Our earliest ancestor that we have record of is John Stevenson, born about 1715 at Breaston, Derbyshire, a small chapelry in the parish of Sawley. He married a woman named Ester, who was born about 1719 at Breaston, also. We have the records of three children born to this couple, Thomas, who was christened in 1739; John in 1745; and William in March 1747. All were christened in the Breaston Parish.

The son John, of this family, born in 1745 is our direct ancestor. He married a woman named Mary, who was born about 1759. We have the records of five children born to this couple, Elizabeth, christened the 25th of April 1776; William, our direct ancestor, christened the 14th of February 1778; Thomas, the 26th of December 1779; Mary, 17th of September 1781; and Robert, the 25th of May 1788. All these children were christened in the Breaston Parish.

Our great grandparent, William, was married to Mary Clements, who was born in 1781 at Borrowash, a small village about four miles east southeast of Derby. They were the parents of five children, Letitia (or Lettice), who married William Simpkin; Isaac who married Fanny Shardlow, for whose father the town of Shardlow was named; John our grandfather, who married first Elizabeth Wilmott, and second Mary Vickers; Joseph who married Mary; and Jane who married Joseph Wragg.

Mary Clements, the mother in this group, was the only member of the Stevenson family of her generation to join the Mormon Church. She was baptized the 17th of October 1850, less than seven years before her death. Her husband had died eleven years previous to this.

John was born the 13th of April 1806, at Breaston, and was married for the first time on the 26th of November 1827, at Breaston Parish, to Elizabeth Wilmott. She was born in 1810 at Draycott, Derbyshire, a village of about 900 inhabitants, located six and one-half miles east southeast of Derby, and in the parish of Sawley, union of Shardlow. This wife died in 1832, shortly after the birth of their first child, a daughter, christened Elizabeth on the 12th of June 1832, and who also died.

The following year John married Mary Vickers who became the mother of our fathers. She was born the 18th of May 1814, at Little Eaton, Derbyshire, a chapelry in the parish of St. Alkmund, Derby, in the union of Shardlow. She was the daughter of John Vickers and Hannah Clifford.

John and Mary were the parents of fourteen children. They are as follows: James Vickers Stevenson, who settled in Ephraim; Elizabeth McMurray who settled ultimately in Liberty, Idaho; Hannah Welch whose home was in Ogden, Utah; three sons by the name of *Amos*, two who died as infants, and the third dying in young manhood; George Vickers Stevenson who settled in Layton, Utah; Fanny Brown who settled in Salt Lake City, Utah; Joseph Brigham Stevenson who settled in Springville, Utah; John Willard Stevenson who settled in Wyoming; Jesse Vickers Stevenson who settled first in Grantsville and later moved to Burley, Idaho; and Lydia Beveridge, the youngest, who spent the greater part of her married life in Uintah County, Wyoming; and two who died as infants, probably without being naming.

The Vickers ancestors originated in Little Eaton, Derbyshire, about eleven miles from Breaston, the home of the Stevensons. Our earliest ancestor, William Vickers, was born in 1740 at Little Eaton, and lived to be 90 years of age. His wife, Mary Breadsall, was born at Little Eaton in 1745 and lived to be 95 years of age. We have a record of only two of their children, Thomas born in 1776; and John who is our direct ancestor, born in 1786, and who died January 13, 1861, at the age of 75 years. He milked his cows the day of his death. He married Hannah Clifford, who was born in Spondon, Derbyshire, midway between Breaston and Little Eaton. She died April 9, 1851, at the age of 65 years, and was buried at Little Eaton.

To John and Hannah Clifford Vickers were born seven children namely, James Vickers who married Bessie; John Vickers who married Anne Gregory; William Vickers who married Lucy Jesson; Mary who married John Stevenson, our ancestor; Hannah who married Robert

Fletcher; and Frances or Fanny as she was called who never married. She lived at the old home and took care of her parents until their death. She had a suitor by the name of Tom Dawson, whose family were close friends of the Vickers, and whom she probably would have married after her father passed away, except that Mr. Dawson attempted to take over the management of her affairs. This upset Fanny very much and as a result, she would not marry him. However, he continued in charge of the grounds, and was remembered by her in her will. He was still living on the place several years later after her death as the caretaker.

John Stevenson was rather short in stature and slender, as was his wife Mary Vickers. He had dark hair and brown eyes. Mary had black wavy hair and dark eyes. She was very trim and neat. John was a musician as a young man, and also composed poetry and wrote considerable prose. He was a master shoemaker by trade. He had a shop in town and hired help, as he was rather delicate physically.

After the death of John's parents, the old home was given to their two sons, Isaac and John Stevenson. It was a double house of red brick with stone cornice, facing south. It had two front doors and two large windows in front. A neatly trimmed boxwood hedge extended from the center of the house on the front to the gate, making the front entrance somewhat private. The hedge also extended across the entire width of the property, in the center of which stood a beautiful white picket gate, with a very auspicious looking handle and elaborate hinges. From the gate, tiny rock walks led to the front doors and another to the well, which served both families, and the out buildings. The house stood in the center of the property so that the land was equally divided. Each family had his own garden and sheds for cows, etc. There were gooseberry bushes, and yellow currant bushes, and apple, pear, and apricot trees. On the west side of the house stood a large pear tree, very close to the wall. In fact, it was so close that the branches were nailed to the wall and roof. The fruit was the best, and the tree was so large that the branches extended half way over the house. On the east side stood an apricot tree that grew likewise. Isaac occupied the west part of the house, which consisted of four rooms; and John and his family lived in the east portion with like rooms. Isaac kept a cow and John raised hogs.

In the summer of 1846 Amos, then two years of age accidentally fell down the well. Immediately Mary ran to its edge and carefully worked herself down head first, while Aunt Fanny Stevenson and her daughter held her feet so she wouldn't slip in. Somehow she managed

to get hold of the child by one hand and pulled him out of the water before any harm had been done him. The excitement caused Fanny to give birth to her baby Marianna sooner than was expected.

Missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints made their appearance in Derbyshire in the very early days of the Church. Early in 1850 John and Mary Vickers Stevenson applied for baptism. Mary was the first and was baptized and confirmed by William West on the 20th of January 1850 and John was baptized by William West and confirmed by John Wheeler on the 11th of February 1850. This William West was the father of Lydia West, who later became the first wife of James Vickers Stevenson, the eldest child in this family. In October Mary Clements Stevenson, was baptized. Two years later the three eldest children of John and Mary also entered the waters of baptism, James, Elizabeth and Hannah. George was baptized in 1854 and Amos and Fanny in 1856. We also have the record of Joseph's baptism in 1865 after the family came to Utah, Lydia's in 1869 and Jesse's in 1886. But we have no record of John Willard having been baptized. He became of baptismal age in May 1862, while the family was in route to Utah. After his mother's death he lived with his stepfather, who was not a member of the Church.

At this early date the Church members were held in ill repute, especially in England. When it became common knowledge that the Stevensons had chosen to cast their lots with this abominable people it had an immediate and decided effect upon John's business. Many of his customers refused to patronize him, and in a short time he found himself forced to give up his shop in town. He subsequently converted a large room in the attic of his home into a shop by building a stairway on the outside, affording an entrance without interrupting his home. One of his hired men, a cripple named Jimmie Plackett, refused to leave him and continued to work on, even though there was little assurance of regular pay.

As the family increased, the house became inadequate for John's family. Isaac's portion served his family well as they had only five children home at that time. It was decided to curtain off part of the room being used as the shop to provide extra bedrooms.

Hannah and Elizabeth, the older girls of the family, worked at the silk factory in Breaston, as did George and Amos. Joseph was often taken along to do small errands. Sometimes the girls would be sent to the factory in Derby City and sometimes to Nottingham.

Regular boarding places were provided for the girls, and they would return home for weekends only. When working at Breaston it was Fanny's job to carry their lunch to them.

James, the oldest son, and Lydia, the daughter of William West, were married about 1854 or 1855 and in company with the West family, immigrated to Utah in the early spring of 1855. At the birth of her second baby in February of 1857, Lydia passed away, as did her baby. The older child, about a year old, had died shortly before.

After the departure of William West for Utah, John Stevenson was set apart as Branch President at Breaston, a position he held for several years. He presided over the Breaston, Draycott, and Barrowash Districts for part of the time, and his home became the headquarters for the elders.

By this time, about the only friends this family had were the Saints. Their relatives, both the Stevensons and the Vickers, had almost disowned them.

In January 1861, Mary Stevenson's father, John Vickers, passed away. It was bitter cold weather, and the streets were covered deep with snow and ice. Our people had quite a journey to get to Little Eaton. Our grandfather made himself some shoes, especially fitted for the trip, with long nails driven through the soles, points down, to serve as grips in the snow and ice. His children asked if he was going to make their mother a pair like them. He said it would not be necessary, as she could hold onto his arm to prevent her from slipping. They had to walk a mile to get to the station in Breaston, then ride the train seven miles to Derby. From there they walked three miles to the Vickers home. The family was called together by the lawyer and each child was awarded twenty pounds from the estate to provide mourning expenses to make ready for the funeral. After the funeral the family was again called to hear the will read. Each one was allotted his share of the estate, according to the wishes of their father, which was quite agreeable to all. Frances, or Fanny, as she was called, and her brother, James, were left larger portions of the estate. Fanny had sacrificed her life to care for her father and mother for many years and James, because of a very serious accident he had met with, which had disfigured him for life and caused him a great deal of suffering.

In the early spring of 1862, our family made ready to immigrate to Zion. They were obliged to sacrifice many valuable things and leave them behind. Family ties had to be severed and good-byes said to brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends. They could take with them only

the bare necessities, for they had a long journey ahead of them. Every pound of luggage to care for was an added burden. They left everything in their house as it stood for the Bancroft family who were moving in with one exception. There was a small dressing table, which John instructed them to give to one of his nieces. It was a very valuable piece of furniture. One piece of furniture the children prized very much and which they were reluctant to leave was the clock. It was a tall grandfather style, which reached from the floor nearly to the ceiling and they loved to watch the long pendulum swing. Mary's share of her father's estate provided the means for their transportation, which John arranged for, through the help and counsel of the Church authorities in the district.

They set sail on the packet ship "John J. Boyd," commanded by Captain J. H. Thomas. It sailed from Liverpool, England, on the 23rd of April 1862, for New York, with 702 emigrating Saints on board. On Monday afternoon, the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, Apostles Charles C. Rich, Amasa M. Lyman, and George Q. Cannon, visited the vessel as it lay in the River Mercy. They organized the company by appointing James S. Brown as President and Elders John Lindsay and Joseph C. Rich as his counselors. They gave the company some good instructions, and bade them Godspeed. After they had left, watchmen were appointed for the night, prayers were said, and all retired as it was near midnight. The next day the company was organized into nine wards, with presiding teachers over each.

At half past seven o'clock in the morning of the 23rd of April they weighed anchor, were towed about twenty miles out to sea, and left in a strong head wind. They were beat about the Irish Channel all day, and about four o'clock in the afternoon they drew so close to the Isle of Man that they could see the towns and could distinguish the houses. The ship tacked about, and sailed away along the coast of Wales. Nearly all on board were seasick, and one child, about five months old, in a family by the name of Hardy, died. It was buried at sea on the 24th.

During the voyage on the ocean Mary Stevenson was ill most of the way, and her life was spared many times. John, her husband enjoyed better health during the ocean voyage than he had done for some time, but after they landed he took very sick and was quite ill for the remainder of the journey. It was noon on the 27th before they passed out of sight of land. They experienced all kinds of weather, from a dead calm to a heavy gale. On May 1st the wind was so strong it carried away the job boom, and the fore top gallant mast. The voyage of this company

across the Atlantic was somewhat longer than usual, due to the bad head winds.

On the trip they had cases of measles and whooping cough, and there were seven deaths. The remainder of the emigrants arrived safely in New York Harbor on the 30th of May. On Monday, June 1st, they landed at Castle Gardens, New York and, after two or three days rest they proceeded west by train, then by to Niagara Falls, and the Lakes to Detroit. They then went by way of Chicago to Quincy, Illinois, across the Mississippi River by steamboat to Hannibal, Missouri, then took the train for St. Joseph, Missouri and then by boat up the Missouri River to Florence, Nebraska. At Florence the company was turned over to Joseph W. Young. Florence, or Winter Quarters, as it was then called, was located on the west bank of the Missouri River and served as an outfitting camp for the emigrant trains.

There was some delay in Florence waiting for captains to be appointed and companies to be organized before they began the tedious trek across the plains. Most of the people there lived in tents, but a man by the name of Bracken had a lumber room for storing grain, and he kindly offered the extra space in this room for the Stevenson family. They swept the grain off the floor, and stacked the bags in one corner to make it as comfortable as possible. There was no furniture. They cooked their meals over a campfire and made their beds on the floor.

While stopping here, George and Amos went down to the Missouri River to see a load of emigrants dock and unload. The day was very hot, and Amos suffered a sunstroke and had to be taken back to camp. This later developed into typhoid fever, and he was very ill for several weeks. He lay on the floor in blankets, and was made as comfortable as possible with what facilities they had. In his delirium he would call for his accordion to be brought to him so he could play for the folks to dance. He finally passed away in July 1862, a few months before his 19th birthday. He was buried at Florence, after a brief service was conducted by some of the brethren there. His casket was a crude wooden box, but it was the best that could be obtained. Grandfather carefully filled in the cracks and holes to make it as air tight as possible.

This was a great trial to the family, who had been called to sacrifice so much for their religion, and now to lose their oldest boy. Mary, his mother, had relied so much on him since his father had been so ill. It was very difficult to leave his body in this lonely spot knowing they would probably never return. It seemed almost more than they were able to bear. Amos was a very lovable boy, and was a favorite with all the family.

The Stevensons were in the first company of emigrants to sail from Europe in 1862 and would have been in the first company to cross the plains that year, had it not been for this sickness. Most of those who had crossed the ocean with them had gone on to Utah.

When it was nearing time for another company to leave, they immediately made ready to join them and then, on to Zion! They were assigned to Captain Joseph Horn's company of five hundred and seventy Saints, many of whom were from Scandinavia. They left Florence, Nebraska, the 29th of July 1862, with fifty-two wagons. Grandfather, of course, was still very sick and the worry and shock of his son's death had greatly aggravated his illness. Sister Crowther, a doctress, which our family had known in England, was leaving for Salt Lake City in the same company and kindly offered to care for him on the journey.

Teamsters were sent out from Salt Lake City to meet and transport the companies across the plains to the Salt Lake Valley. They brought with them several horses for the guides to ride. Wagons and oxen were obtained in Florence, where they had been overhauled and repaired, and the oxen shod for the long, hard trip. Fanny rode horseback a good share of the way. Just four days out of Salt Lake City, Sister Crowther's son in law, David McKenzie, came out to meet the emigrant train with a team of horses, and took Sister Crowther into Salt Lake City ahead of the Stevensons. They were unable to locate her for quite some time after they arrived. The company, on the whole, had a prosperous journey with but little sickness and no serious accidents. The wagon train arrived in Salt Lake City October 1, 1862. They were weary and worn, but happy to be at their journey's end. The Stevenson family were sorely tried, for Father Stevenson was critically ill, and remained so until ten days later, when he passed on to his reward October 11, 1862. The interment took place three days later in the City Cemetery.

This was a calamity indeed for our grandmother as she was a stranger in a strange country. Kind friends ministered what they could, but at this early day there were few people who had more than enough for their own families and here was Mary with a family of eight children to care for. The eldest son, James, who was already in Salt Lake City, had remarried after the death of his first wife. James had married Elizabeth Quinn in January of 1860, in Brigham Young's office. They had two children when his parents arrived. Elizabeth Stevenson, the oldest girl, now twenty-three years of age, was married just a week after her father's death to James Hutton McMurray, a teamster whom she had met in Florence. She moved to

Grantsville where his family lived. Hannah, the next in the family, was married in December after their arrival as a third wife to Charles Welch, one of the missionaries she had met on the boat coming from England. She moved to Ogden. This left George Vickers Stevenson, a lad of sixteen, the eldest at home and Lydia, the youngest daughter, not quite three. James and his family moved to Ephraim the following year, 1863. Fanny, the oldest girl, left at home and went to Ogden to work. George went to Kaysville to work as a chore boy for John S. Smith, who later became his father in law. Joseph Brigham went to Ephraim to work for his brother James herding cattle and whatever else he could do for his board and keep.

Even with part of her children scattered here and there trying to make their own way, it was still a difficult time for Mary. She was obliged to work hard in exchange for food and some clothing for herself and her three little ones, John Willard, seven; Jesse, five; and Lydia, not quite three. About two years later Mary was advised to accept the proposal of a man by the name of Joseph Dorian, who had been very kind to her and wanted to make a home for her and her children. Dorian was a cabinetmaker by trade from Kirtland, Ohio. While traveling with his wife to Utah he had stopped at Fort Bridger. While there Dorian's wife deserted him and married a soldier whose company was stationed at the Fort. Subsequently, he married Mary Vickers Stevenson late in 1864 or early in 1865. They lived in a place called Morristown, located east of the Fort Douglas Cemetery.

In November of 1867 Mary Vickers Stevenson Dorian died in Salt Lake City, Utah. A little more than five years had passed since the death of her husband, John Stevenson. Mary was in her fifty-fourth year at the time of her death,

Following her death Jesse, the youngest boy, went to Grantsville to live with his sister, Elizabeth McMurray. Fanny, who had married Austin Milton Brown in 1865, took Lydia, the baby of the family, to live with her. John Willard now a boy of thirteen remained with his stepfather and finally joined the army at the age of seventeen. He was transferred to different camps and after ten years of army duty was given his honorable discharge at Camp Kearny, Wyoming, in 1882. While stationed in Wyoming in 1877 he married Mary Ann Finn, the daughter of an army officer. After retiring from the army, he took up a ranch near Buffalo, Wyoming, and raised his family there.

George Vickers Stevenson married Eliza Maria Smith in 1867, and moved to Layton,

Utah. Joseph Brigham married Katherine Bacon in 1874, who died a year later leaving an infant daughter. He then married Isabelle Pennington in 1878, and moved to Springville. Jesse Stevenson married Annie Althers Millward in 1897, and settled in Grantsville, later moving to Idaho. Lydia married William Beveridge in 1875, and moved to Wyoming. They were the parents of twelve children. Both Lydia and her husband died and were buried in Springville, Utah.

In 1882, several years after the death of John Vickers in England, who was the father of Mary Vickers Stevenson, Frances Vickers, or Fanny as she was called, advertised in the paper to learn if her nephew, James Vickers Stevenson, had any living children. She said she had heard that all of her sister Mary's family had died soon after reaching Salt Lake City. Of course, she received letters from most of them later and learned where they were and how they were doing. She asked for portraits of them and promised to send pictures of the cousins living in England. A picture of James was sent, and probably others. At her death in 1884 she left a will distributing her property to all the living relatives. One fourth of her estate was distributed among the children of her sister, Mary Vickers Stevenson, in Utah.

The Vickers family for generations have been thrifty, well to do people and among the finest of English folk. When our people accepted the Latter-day Saint religion, it all but severed the family ties, however after contact with Fanny there was some correspondence with some of the cousins in later years.

In 1889 George Vickers Stevenson was called to serve as a missionary to England, leaving a wife and seven children. He was privileged to visit many of the relatives there and to give them the gospel message. Some were very friendly to him; others were not. Some told him he would do better to go home and do some honest work. While traveling on the boat to England he met and talked to Edward Stevenson, who was also going on a mission to England. They discovered that their great grandfathers were brothers.

While in Little Eaton, Derbyshire, George stayed for three days with cousin Sarah Fletcher, the daughter of Hannah Vickers and Robert Fletcher, who was living in the old Vickers home. Joseph Brigham Stevenson also corresponded with Francis Fletcher, a son of this couple, who was last heard of in South America. Uncle William Vickers was the only member of Mary Vickers Stevenson's immediate family yet living when Uncle George was there and he was in

poor health. He passed away the following year on the 23rd of November 1890. It is said that one of Mary Vickers great grandfathers lived to be one hundred years old, and another one to be one hundred and one years of age. One was probably the father of William Vickers, and the other the father of Mary Breadsall, or the grandfather of Hannah Clifford.

The families of John and Mary Vickers Stevenson have branched out and have grown much since they came to the Salt Lake Valley years ago. They now constitute a very large group of direct kin, and an equally large group who have been adopted into the family circle by marriage.

It is hoped that this brief account will help each member of the family to better appreciate the splendid heritage that is theirs, and to honor and revere the memory of their forebears, and the principles for which they stood and sacrificed so much. They were noble men and women, tried and true, who have made it possible for us to enjoy the freedom, peace, prosperity, and protection of a land choice above all others.

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*This history of the Stevenson-Vickers Families is published as it was written and as it has been preserved through family members. The author is unknown.*