

Thomas Jefferson Thurston Biography

Thomas Jefferson Thurston, son of Peter and Hannah Butler Thurston, was born in Fletcher, Vermont, 1805. He was a descendant of Daniel Thurston who came from England in 1630.

When he was a child the family moved to Ohio, where they worked very hard clearing land of timber for farming. The grain was harvested with a sickle and was threshed by hand with a flail.

At the age of 23 he married Rozetta Bull who was then 19. They were blessed with 12 children, the tenth being born in a covered wagon on the plains from Nauvoo to Iowa in 1846. It was at the time of the martyrdom of Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, that Thomas J. Thurston first became interested in the Mormon Church. He and his family joined the church in the year 1844, sold their farm and joined the saints in Nauvoo, where he gave fully of his means to those in distress. He helped finish the Nauvoo Temple and he and his wife received their endowments before it was destroyed. He helped many people with the necessities of life at Winter Quarters and on their pilgrimage west, until President Brigham Young would take no more.

They reached Salt Lake City October 6, 1847, built one of the first adobe houses. from adobes the family made themselves.

Mr. Thurston brought with him some seed balls from potato vines, which he planted the next spring. Every potato was saved for seed for the next three years before the family could have any to eat. They ate many segoes as food was very scarce.

They decided to explore the islands in Great Salt Lake for food. Thomas J. Thurston, William Potter, Joseph Mount and Stephen Spaulding built the first boat and made the trip. They called the boat "Mud Hen." Nothing edible was found. Later the boat was used by Thurston to ferry the gold seekers on their way to California, across the Bear River.

The family moved to Centerville in 1848 and there Thomas married his second wife, Elizabeth Smith, and built the first log house. He tried dry farm-

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