

## FAMILY HISTORY

Page 5

<p>In the spring of 1855 Robert Hodgert selected his home-site in what is now the heart of the city, just one block north of the Court House. He got one fourth block, or two acres, and paid \$5.00 to have it surveyed. For this ground he paid \$ 1.25 an acre. Everyone had to make their own adobies, so with the help of Thomas and Ellen, Hodgert began to make his and put them in the sun to dry. Usually it took about two weeks, all depending upon the weather. Finally, he had enough to build two rooms; one larger than the other, about 13 by 15 feet. The floor was made of 12 inch boards and were not even planed, but in time they became smooth because they were rubbed with sand to keep them clean. The doors were made of the same lumber and there were two windows with 8 by 10 inches of glass in them. The roof was made with timbers placed across and then about eight inches of rushes were piled on top. On top of this was spread the adobie mud, then another layer of rushes and mud. This was repeated until it was about twelve inches thick. When it was finally finished, it was a fine roof and kept out the water. In the large room was a huge fireplace and in front of it hung the huge iron kettle. This is where all the cooking was done. There were two beds in this room and the ticks were filled with cat-tail floss. Many meetings were held here, and this home was a center for all the entertainment of a small group. The people were united and helped one another in all their tasks; it was always a struggle for the necessities of life.</p> <p>The first child to be born in this room was a little girl named Victoria Adelaide. She was born June 7, 1854. My mother, Ellen, always laughed when she told me about that day. She was fourteen years at that time, and when her mother sent her hurrying over the field to get the mid-wife, she was scared out of her wits. To add to her fears, a terrible electric storm had come up and the lightning and thunder frightened her. When the two returned to her mother, there was a gentle stream</p>	<p>trickling down on the bed. It had made its way through the imperfect roof. Her job was to stand and hold an umbrella over my grandmother while she gave birth to the baby. Even under these conditions, Victoria lived to be eighty-eight years old.</p> <p>Later on Bro. Hodgert took up thirty five acres of farm land up near the river in the northern part of the settlement. Here he raised fine crops. My mother described those early days in Provo as nothing but poverty and a struggle for survival. Everyone worked very, very hard. They all had the same ideals and believed in the same Gospel. It made them contented and willing to serve the Lord because they felt sure of exaltation in the hereafter. Families shared with each other and lived on their own production and exchange of products with their neighbors. Everything was utilized--nothing was wasted.</p> <p>Families had to make their own soap, candles and dry their fruit and vegetables for winter. Food was stored in huge pits dug in the ground. The best they ate and the other was fed to the cattle. Molasses was made from the sugar cane. They gathered herbs for medicine such as catnip, peppermint and arnica. They spun and carded the wool dyed it and wove it into cloth for their clothing.</p> <p>At first the wheat was threshed with a flail, then the cradle. All this was before Cyrus McCormick invented the harvesting machine.</p> <p>They gathered Saleratus from the low Utah Lake Lowlands. This was used for making biscuits, also soap.</p> <p>In 1858 all their crops were destroyed by grasshoppers. That winter they suffered unbelievable hardships and almost starved to death. They existed on the wild spinach, thistle hearts and sego roots. The year 1859 brought bumper crops and prosperity to all the Pioneers. Robert Hodgert had never done any farming, but he worked diligently and learned to raise fine crops. His potatoes won first prize at the Deseret Fair in October.</p>
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## FAMILY HISTORY

Page 6

1859.	prepared and placed under her arm.
He and the children had made enough adobies to build on to the two rooms and they were very happy. However, at this time he received a call to go on another mission to England. He had labored there as a traveling missionary for five years prior to his release so he could emigrate to the United States. I think this call was quite a shock to the family but in those days, no one ever refused a call. There was no building now and they began to prepare for his departure. On December 13, 1859 a baby girl arrived and she was named Mary Jane, but was always called "Polly".	In the fall of this same year Robert Hodgert had been released from his mission because of ill health and he returned home a sick man. He got transportation as far as Omaha, Nebraska. From there he walked the rest of the way. It was during August and September and the heat was terrific. He was sun struck and never well after. He died May 21, 1867. Thomas was always a good worker. He was sympathetic and kind to his mother and brother and sisters. On September 25, 1864, Thomas married Martha Isabelle Billingsley. She was born January 13, 1844 in Mississippi. They had eight children.
It was a very severe winter and it wasn't until April that Robert Hodgert and his wife Jane got to Salt Lake where they had their endowments in the old Salt Lake Endowment House on April 2, 1860. He left them for his long trip across the plains.	Martha Jane-----born July 6, 1865. Warren Thomas-----born December 2, 1866. Lovina Emaline-----born March 29, 1868. Twins-Adelia Maude-----born June 9, 1871.
Now Thomas took over as the head of the family. He was a very affectionate boy and was a comfort to his mother and a hard worker. The little mother with her five months old baby, resumed the trade she knew in England to braid straw and make hats. Both Thomas and Ellen knew how to braid straws. Ellen could braid as much as thirty-five yards a day--seven strands. They were very helpful and the mother did the sewing and blocking and they were quite successful.	Joseph Adelbert--born June 9, 1871. Effie May-----born August 24, 1873. Archie Gilbert---born June 20, 1879. Ray Randolph-----born July 12, 1883.
Thomas did exceptionally well with the farm and everything was going well until the early spring of 1862. Ellen had washed the smut out of the wheat in bitterly cold weather so Thomas could plant it. She caught a severe cold that settled in her eyes. The lids must have been paralyzed for it was years before she could see again. I have told all about this great affliction in her history. She was eighteen years old when it happened, and it caused her mother lots of sorrow. However, with her sensitive fingers, she could braid just as many yards when the straws were	All the children were born in Provo, Utah and their home was three blocks East of his mother's and Thomas, on the way to work at the woolen mills, stopped to see his mother every day. He was loved by all who met him or worked with him. He and Reed Smoot (the senator from Utah for over thirty years) were companions. Both worked side by side in the mill for years. The oldest daughter named her son "Reed Rollo" after Mr. Smoot. Thomas was only forty-four years old when he was stricken with inflammation of the bowels (known today as Appendicitis) and died on April 17, 1885. He is buried in the Provo city cemetery. Everyone I have talked to has described him as a tall handsome man. He was straight as an arrow and walked with a stride. His bright brown eyes and smiling face

FAMILY HISTORY

Page 7

His bright brown eyes and smiling face endeared him to everyone. He was always kind and gentle and his children adored him. He was so young and full of life that his wife and mother could not reconcile themselves to his parting. Everyone in Provo tried to comfort the widow and her family. The older children went out to work and Aunt Martha worked too, but she never neglected her children. The seven of them all grew up to womanhood and manhood. The girls were exceptionally pretty and I remember them as the belles of the town. The boys were good looking young men and in time they all were married.

Aunt Martha never married again. She was a wonderful woman and did her best to rear her family. They loved her and dearly and took care of her up until her death. She was blind for about ten years before she died and she was never neglected at any time. She never wanted for love, care, or help. She used to visit my mother and I always loved to hear her sing, "In the Gloaming" and tell stories of early days in Provo. She was a very pretty woman and a good Latter-Day Saint. She died February 16th, 1915 while on a visit to her son Warren, at Nyssa, Oregon and was buried at Provo, Utah.

Funeral Services for Thomas Fenn taken from the "Territorial Enquirer, Provo City Tuesday, April 21, 1885."

The last sad rites over the remains of Thomas Fenn were performed on Saturday last. The Fourth Ward Meeting House was crowded with sorrowing relatives and friends. The services were conducted by Bishop J. E. Booth. Elder James Dunn reviewed the life of Brother Fenn since his first acquaintance with him, which was in 1852. He testified to the integrity and faithfulness of the deceased in business, religious and family capacity.

Spoke of him as a truthful and strictly honest man, and a devoted follower of Christ.

Counselor D. John bore his testimony to the description already given, for he could do so from personal acquaintance. He knew that the departed one left a good record behind him, and one that his family would do well to imitate. Speaker felt to bless the bereaved and hoped they would be comforted in the words that had been spoken relative to the character and life of the deceased.

Elder K. G. Maeser though not so extensively acquainted with Brother Fenn during his life as were those who had already spoken, still he knew he must have been a faithful and good man, from the knowledge he had of him during his last sickness. None other than a God fearing man, a man full of faith in the ordinances of the Gospel could have exercised such implicit confidence in the administrations of the Priesthood. Brother Thomas Fenn had only gone before, we all of us must inevitably meet that which he has passed through, and happy is he who can meet it leaving behind him the greatest legacy to mankind that is in his power - an honest life.

President Smoot could not speak from personal acquaintance with Brother Fenn but he felt that he must have been a man retiring in his ways. And from the testimonies given should say he had been a good man. If he had been one of the reckless and boisterous kind, he would have undoubtedly have more of him. He felt to ask God's blessing to rest upon the family and other relatives, and hoped that all would be prepared to meet their final issue.

The services were then brought to a close by a few counseling from Bishop J. E. Booth. The body was then followed to its last resting place by a vast cortege of carriages.

May he rest in peace until the resurrection morn.

THE END.