

Edward Hunter

Mormon Battalion Member and Utah Pioneer

(The following history was compiled by Helen Hale Winward, granddaughter of Edward Hunter. It was written in present tense to be presented at a Hunter reunion, and is copied as written.)

On the 16th of January 1775, Edward Hunter of Newtown Square, Delaware, Pennsylvania married Hannah Maris of Springfield, Delaware, Pennsylvania. This couple became the parents of eight children. Two of their children - William, born in 1784, and Edward in 1793, are of special interest to us because they are the ancestors of the English line of Hunter's here in the West.

William Hunter married Sarah Ann Davis on the 17 of April 1812. Sarah Ann was the daughter of Mordecai Davis and Jesse David (or Davies). They became the parents of ten children, my grandfather Edward being the fifth child and the first boy born to them. He was named after his grandfather and his Uncle Edward. In the autobiography of his uncle Edward Hunter, he states "he was unfortunate in raising children, and owning a great deal of land, needed help in working it." It may have been brotherly love that led William to send his eldest son to help Edward out, or it may have been a need for money at home; whatever the reason, Edward went to live with his Uncle Edward to help work his land. (In later years, someone asked why Edward was sent and the reply was that Edward was such a tease to his four older and two younger sisters, that he was sent to help out on that big farm. We do know that the elder Edward became very attached to young Edward and raised him as his own.)

Edward (the elder) donated a piece of his land to be used for the building of the West Nantmeal (or Wallace) Seminary. The stipulation was that the building was for the use of all sects to preach their religious beliefs. This was very satisfactory until the Mormon Elders came that way. The neighbors were very much against Mr. Hunter letting them use the building. Mr. Hunter stood guard as the Elders preached, and he became converted to the gospel. The chances are that young Edward was there, too, and that he heard the Prophet Joseph and other leaders, as they were also entertained at the home of his Uncle.

At some time both Edwards went to Nauvoo and were baptized. Grandpa was baptized by Elder L. D. Barnes in June 1841, and his Uncle was baptized in October of 1841 by Orson Hyde. These two stalwarts were the only members of the Hunter families to join the Church. Following is a letter that was written by grandfather to his uncle, reporting the conditions in Nauvoo at that time:

City of Nauvoo - May 6, 1841

Respected Uncle:

I arrived here last Saturday after a tedious journey of three weeks from the time I left Philadelphia. I am well at present and I hope that these lines will find you enjoying the same blessings. Nauvoo is situated in a very pleasant place. The soil is of the first quality and improvements are going on at a rapid rate.

I should suppose that there is something like 400 houses here and the chief has been created in the short space of two years.

The brethren seem very kind.

They have a battalion of men here called the Nauvoo Legion. They are determined that they will no more submit to mobs. They can raise 700 men, efficient for military duty already.

There have been something like 400 brethren arrive here in about a fortnight [14 days]. Some are from England, others from Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Philadelphia, etc.

The corner stones of the temple have been laid. The Nauvoo House is to be commence immediately.

Board here is \$2.50 per week.

It is quite sickly here. Several have died within a few weeks with the winter fever and dysentery. Fever and Ague [now this is called Malaria] is quite prevalent here.

I'm going up the Mississippi River about 600 miles to help get timber for the Nauvoo House. I get \$20 per month and found and take my pay in land as money here is very scarce.

I am very well pleased with the place. It exceeds my expectation. Capitalist is wanted here very bad. I should like you to come out here after the harvest if you can and see the place. Any person bringing \$2,000 here could, I think, in a few years double the same.

I do not feel anything like denying the faith, but I hope through my service to increase it. Baptism for the dead is going on here every week, more or less. There was 450 baptized last fast day

week and yesterday I saw Brother Appleby from New Jersey baptized 34 times for his departed relatives. No more at present but I remain, yours, etc.

(signed) Edward Hunter

There is a line in that letter that endeared Grandfather to me very much. I quote, "I do not feel anything like denying the faith, but I hope through my services to increase it." In the elder Edward's notes or diary, he relates that he visited Nauvoo in September of 1841 and purchased lots for \$3600.

In a later letter, written from Lee County, Iowa, Grandpa tells of the sickness in the country. The letter follows:

December 11, 1841

Respected Uncle,

I have been thinking of writing to you for some time, but owing to sickness I could not write much sooner. I have got much better than I was when you were here, but I am not able to do much yet. I am now living with Mr. Whitesides in Iowa, about four miles above Montrose.

I was over to Nauvoo this week. Your house is up one story high. Owing to bad weather and other impediments they have not been able to get it on any further. Just after you left Nauvoo Mr. Weiler Rodeback was taken sick and was sick nearly two months. James was deranged a greater part of the time and could not see to it and Molton lost his best horse and they had to hire the brick and lumber hauled. R. Pierce's house is up a half story easy. The brick layers think that it best to do no more on them 'till spring owing to the frost.

The snow fell here about two feet the latter end of November and the weather is very cold. Produce is very low here. Pork at 1½ cent per pound and corn at from 18 to 20 cents per bushel.

The people have been coming in here pretty fast this fall, about seventy families of English have arrived here lately.

I have no news of consequence to tell you. Things go on pretty well. The temple and Nauvoo House is going on slowly. They are now engaged in getting stone. I don't expect I shall be able to do much 'till spring. The ague has racked me a good deal but I

think I shall get over it this winter. Brother Burk is still shaking with the ague. All the rest of the Chester County folks are pretty well.

I want you to write and let me know how you are all coming on. I want to see you all up to Zion. I think that Iowa is more handsome than Illinois. There has been a good deal of talk about the titles in Iowa. They are trying to throw it into Government land but I don't think they will do it.

Give my respects to all inquiring friends. I have not time to write more now owing to the lateness of the evening. I remain yours in the covenant.

(Signed) Edward Hunter

While working in Nauvoo the following year Edward stayed at the home of James and Penina Evans Whitesides where he met and married their lovely daughter Mary Ann, on the 18th of November 1843. This marriage was performed by their friend, Hyrum Smith. It is interesting to note here that Mary Ann was given a Book of Mormon by Hyrum Smith when he was courting her. That book is in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers building in Salt Lake City. In the cover are some quail feathers that were plucked from the quail that were sent for food when the pioneers were forced across the ice in the dead of winter, and they were nearly starved.

Grandpa was an officer in the Nauvoo Legion, having been commissioned the 9th of September (year unknown) by Governor Thomas Carlin of Illinois. He served as the Herald and Armor Bearer to the Lieutenant General of the Nauvoo Legion, Joseph Smith.

He was a Seventy in the Priesthood when he took his wife Mary Ann to the Nauvoo Temple for their endowments on the 6th of February 1846.

It was this same Grandpa of mine that answered the call to arms in the war with Mexico. Brigham Young had been asked to furnish 500 able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 45 and it was from this call that the Mormon Battalion was organized. Grandfather was then just twenty-five years old, married and had one girl child. This famous company was disbanded in San Diego, California the 26th of June 1846 after serving 16 months.

The following is a tribute to the Battalion men, quoted from *The Mormon Battalion 1846-7* pages 140-141, by Kate B. Carter

"This group of men merit our gratitude for their achievements. They opened highways over deserts and mountains; laid the basis for the Southern Pacific rails, and the Salt Lake and Los Angeles railroad; they helped conquer North Mexico, which is now New Mexico, western Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and California. Members of the Battalion helped in the discovery of gold at Sutter's Fort, and were the first to carry this momentous news from the great Salt Lake Valley to the Missouri River.

"They aided in the adoption of irrigation farming by Anglo Saxon people in California . . . and built forts, white washed buildings, helped build towns and villages, and some returned to become permanent settlers in the Golden State. Some of the men brought the first seeds from the coast to the Salt Lake Valley and were responsible for the prolific bearing of the California pea and the club-headed wheat in the intermountain territory. The Battalion made the first wagon road over the southern route and traversed mountain valleys to make the way safe for others to follow.

"On January 30, 1847, Lt. Colonel Cooke issued the following: `The Lt. Col. commanding congratulates the Battalion on their safe arrival on the shore of the Pacific Ocean and the conclusion of their march of over 2000 miles. History may be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry. Half of it has been through a wilderness where nothing but savages and wild beasts are found. There, with almost hopeless labor we have dug wells, which the future traveler will enjoy. Without a guide who had traversed them we have ventured into trackless tablelands where water was not found for several marches. With crowbar and pick and ax in hand, we have worked our way over the mountains, which seemed to defy aught save the wild goat, and hewed a passage through a chasm of living rock more narrow than our wagons. To bring these first wagons to the Pacific we have preserved the strength of our mules by herding them over large tracts which you have laboriously guarded without loss. Thus, marching half naked, and half fed, and living upon wild animals, we have discovered and made a road of great value to our country. Arriving at the first settlement of California after a single day's rest, you cheerfully turned off from the

route to this point of promised repose, to enter upon a campaign, and meet, as we supposed, the approach of an enemy; but this, too, without salt to season your sole subsistence of fresh meat. Lt. A. J. Smith and George Stone, of the First Dragoons, have shared and given valuable aid in all these labors.

'Thus, volunteers, you have exhibited some high and essential qualities of veterans. But much remains undone. Soon you will turn your attention to the drill, to system and order, to forms also, which are all necessary to the soldier.'

By order of

Lt. Col. P. St. George Cooke, P. C. Merrill, Adjutant."

Grandfather was mustered out of the Battalion on the 15th of July 1847 in San Diego, California and was prepared to start the next day for Missouri to get his wife and child, when he learned they were already in the Salt Lake Valley. He followed along the Northern California trail, now known as the 49'ers trail, and headed across Granite Pass above the Horse Shoe trail in Nevada. With two other Battalion men, Dore Curtis and James Dunn, he came down the Goose Creek Valley (now Oakley, Cassia County, Idaho). He was very much taken up with the lush growth and tall vegetation, the sparkling streams and wild life, and made his report to Brigham Young as to the advisability of the saints settling the country there. He never lived there himself but his son, Lud Hunter, brought some of the first sheep into the valley for his father. Rosel, Heman and William Hunter, as well as my father, Solomon E. Hale (a son-in-law) were among the first settlers in the valley where they all ran their sheep for a living.

Edward arrived in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake on the 14th of October 1847. One can but imagine his joy at finding that his wife and daughter had come into the valley with his Uncle Edward, and were then living in The Fort - now known as Pioneer Park. He and his family spent the winter in The Fort, then moved to Willow Creek (now Grantsville), Tooele Co., Utah.

Grandpa married my grandmother, Martha Ann Hyde, as a plural wife the 30th of March 1856. She was the daughter of Rosel Hyde and Mary Ann Cowles. Grandpa was 20 years her senior. I have heard my mother, Helen Louisa Hunter Hale, tell how, when it was grandpa's time to come to their house, the place was cleaned from top to bottom, cooking and baking done well in advance, and how he was treated just as though he was one of the

General Authorities visiting there. Martha and her children were in charge of and ran the farm pretty much by themselves. There were eleven children in the family.

My sister Rachel tells of our mother remembering one day when her father came home and found the neighbors' pigs in the garden. He was very upset, calling to Martha and the children to come quickly, all the while berating the neighbors because they couldn't take better care of their pigs, etc., etc. Grandma said, "Now Edward, they probably don't know anything about it. I am sure they would get them out if..." Grandpa interrupted, "Excuses, excuses! Martha, your neighbors could do no wrong. You always have excuses for other people!" This quality of looking for the best in others, seems to have passed on to some of Martha's children and grandchildren.

Grandfather was one of the first City Council members and with them, organized the city of Grantsville on June 4, 1867. In 1870, he upheld the law and saw that justice was given to a murderer. On April 11, 1871 he was set apart as Second Counselor to Thomas H. Clark in the Branch Presidency, and on November 10th of the same year he was set apart for a mission to the United States. In 1873, he was elected mayor of Grantsville and sustained as First Counselor to William Jefferies in the branch Presidency. When the branch became a ward, June 24, 1877, Edward Hunter was made the first Bishop. Uncle Davis Hunter says his father went by buggy to St. George in September 1877 to perform the temple work for his family. His oldest daughter, Sarah Ann, went along to be a proxy for the female family members.

Uncle Davis says his father was a great one for punctuality. One day, when a meeting had been called for the City Council, he was the only one there at the appointed time. He was leaving to go home when some of the others arrived and asked him if there was going to be a meeting that night. He replied, "It has already been held." He then proceeded on his way home. His Sunday suit consisted of a new pair of overalls. He did not wish to dress any better than the poorest man in his ward. He had many traits of his Quaker ancestry. His mother and grandmother were members of the Quaker sect.

In 1888 when Grandfather was released as Bishop, he was presented with a cane by the members of the Grantsville Ward. It is of dark wood, tapered, with an inch gold tip and a beautiful gold head tapering down with

prongs to hold it to the wood. It is heavily carved with this inscription on top: "Bishop E. Hunter. Presented by members of the Grantsville Ward." This cane was passed down through the family.

Grandpa had nine children by his first wife, and eleven by his second wife, plus Saidee whom he adopted. He died on the 11th of April 1892, having provided well for his two families. He suffered much during his last illness, and died of Bright's disease. Mary Ann Whitesides Hunter died the 20th of November 1914, and Martha Ann Hyde Hunter died the 28th of November 1926. Grandpa's tombstone in Grantsville cemetery bears the inscription, "To Our Beloved Bishop." Both of his wives are buried beside him.

The following poem is one of Edward Hunter's favorites:

THE TINGLE OF THE SHINGLE

When the angry passions rising on my mother's face I see,
When she leads me to the bedroom--lays me gently on her knee,
Then I know that I will catch it and my flesh in fancy itches,
As I wait for the tingle of the shingle on my britches.
Every tingle of the shingle brings an echo and a sting,
And a thousand burning' fancies into active being spring.
And ten-thousand bees and hornets 'neath my coattail seem to swarm,
As I listen to the tingle of the shingle, oh, so warm.
In a sudden intermission which appears my only chance
I said "Strike gently, mother, or you'll split my Sunday pants."
She stops a moment, draws a breath, the shingle holds aloft,
And says, "I hadn't thought of that, my son, just take them off."
Holy Moses, and the angels cast your pitying glances down,
And, thou, oh family doctor, put a good soft poultice on,
And may I with rogues and wretches ever lasting intermingle,
If again I say a word when my mother wields a shingle.