

HENRY THOMAS STOLWORTHY

Henry Thomas was born 15 November, 1860, in Salt Lake City, Utah, where the Union Pacific Depot now stands, to Thomas Stolworthy and Matilda Jinkerson. He was the seventh child in a family of 11 children, five of whom died in infancy. He was named for his grandfather and his father.

When he was a baby, Brigham Young called his father to settle Centerville. Here four little girls were added to the family, Roseannah, Lucity, Molly and Ann. In 1868 the family were again called to leave their home and go to settle the Muddy Valley in Nevada. On the way to the Muddy they found the Navajo Indians very troublesome, and they corralled their horses and oxen when ever possible leaving a man on guard. One night at Beaver we found a good place to corral our animals. We had not encountered any Indians all day in our travels, so the men decided that a guard was not necessary. They all went to bed and to sleep. Some time later my father was awakened by our dog, Mage. He would go to father's bed, barking lustily, and then run toward the corral. Father watched the dog's strange actions for awhile, then got up and followed the dog to the corral. In the dim starlight he saw two shadowy figures in the act of letting down the bars of the corral. Father gave a great yell and the Indians took fright and ran away. Mage was a hero and was petted and made over by the little company. Later they were not so lucky, all their animals were driven off by the Indians and the little company were stranded until men went to the Muddy and secured help.

Henry Thomas attended his first school here at the Muddy, held in a willow bowery. Life was hard in Muddy Valley, with Indians raiding their camps and taking their livestock. About this time Annie died, her parents were heartbroken; but they were pioneers in very deed and bore their burdens bravely.

From the Muddy, the Stolworthy family was called to St. George where they lived with brother and sister Jarvis and their family all winter. They were English converts who had migrated to America with them. In the spring of 1872, Thomas was called to take his family and go with a company to rebuild Mt. Carmel where a renegade band of Indians had made a company of pioneers vacate the place and then destroyed most of the buildings. The new town was built in fort shape with all the buildings facing the center in a circle. The only outlet was a gate and a guard was stationed there day and night. During the day the men worked the adjoining fields, and at night the cattle and horses and put in the big corral built in the center. President Brigham Young advised them to organize themselves into a United Order and build a new community, and give Mt. Carmel back to it's previous owners.

The new settlement was named Orderville. Each member turned in his possessions which were appraised by the board of directors and a certificate of stock was given in exchange. The Order was then divided into departments such as farming, stock raising, milling and factories, with a foreman over each department. People were called to do the work they were best adapted for, and were paid common wages. The town was laid out and a big community house was built on the public square. At the tolling of the bell the people assembled here both night and morning for prayer. Here they also met to worship the Lord in Sunday School and Sacrament meeting. This building also contained a large kitchen and dining room where the

meals were cooked and served for all. Henry Thomas worked as a dairy boy and when he grew older herded cattle on the range. As a young cowboy, he had many encounters with the Indians who caused disturbances among the early settlers. He was known among the Indians as Buckskin Tom.

In April, 1877, the St. George Temple was finished and dedicated. Thomas and Matilda wanted to go to St. George and take young Tom with them to do work there, but being a young boy, he could not see the importance of Temple work and refused to go. He remained indifferent to the pleas of his father and mother for some time. He felt that he did not have a Testimony of the Gospel and that he must wait until he did to do this work. The following is his story.

“I had been out hunting horses since daylight. All day my thoughts had been on the Temple work my father wanted me to do. I decided that what I needed most was a testimony of the divinity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that I could not do the work until I had gained that testimony. The sun was setting and I had found no trace of the horses, so I decided to ask the Lord to lead me to them. I got down on my knees and did so in prayer; and I told my Heavenly Father that if He would do this I would accept it as a testimony of His Gospel. As I got to my feet and mounted my horse a voice plainly spoke to me saying, “Go to the six mile pool and your horses will be there.”

Realizing that I was hearing a voice when no one was present, I sat in silence and the voice came again, “Go to the six mile pool and your horses will be there.” Yet I made no move to go for another voice was arguing in my heart. “It is sundown, and it will be dark before you reach the pool. Many horses water there and you can’t find your horses in the dark. You are six miles from home, six miles to the pool and you would have twelve mites to go in the darkness”. I had made no sound, yet my thoughts had been read. The voice spoke again carrying a well deserved rebuke; “The Lord is leading you to your horses, and He can find them in the night as well as day.”

I turned at once riding in the direction of the six mile pool. Night came on and the darkness settled about me and my courage began to ebb away when the voice said; “Leave the road and take the trail that follows the foot of the mountain.” After following this trail for a short time the voice again directed, “Leave the trail now and go upon the bench.”

I had traveled this trail before and by now I was fully convinced that I was being led to my horse by a messenger of the Lord and I followed on, and found the trail was evidently a shorter way, for I soon found myself on the bench. To my right the pool gleamed in the darkness, and I made my way to it. Two horses stood near the brink of the pool. “Whiskey”, I called. The horse threw up his head, and I knew that it was the horses I wanted. After I found the horses, the voice came to me no more. I was left to find my way home the best way I could. At first I was very touched with my experience, but told no one about it. All at once I seemed to realize what my Heavenly Father required of me, and I went at once to my father and told him I was ready to go [to] the temple with him at any time. We went to the St. George temple that fall and again in the spring where I worked with my father and mother for our kindred dead. I acted as proxy for my dead brothers and we were sealed as one family.

On December 12, 1879, Henry Thomas married Lydia Young in the St. George Temple. He kept on with his work in the Order, and in 1881, he was made foreman of the O.U.O. Cattle Company.

On March 12, 1882, he married a second wife, Johanna Covington. Plural marriage was practiced by the Mormon People at this time.

At the close of twelve years, the Presidency of the Church stated that it was no longer required to live the United Order. Henry Thomas moved his families to Huntington, Utah. Life was a hard struggle here. It being a new country, where there were canals to be made, fences to be erected, and land to be cleared and broken up. Men with plural wives were reported as law breakers and the prisons were filling with men who were martyrs for a principle they believed in.

In 1899, Henry Thomas moved his families to Kirtland, New Mexico where he resided until his death. It took 16 days to make the trip with two teams and wagons. That fall Johanna died, and Lydia took the motherless children and raised them as her own.

Theirs was a typical pioneer life. They lived in a three-room house, but they were warm and they had the basic necessities of life. They hauled water on a sled from the river in barrels. To bathe they used a galvanized tub, heating the water on the cook stove. There were cows to milk, calves to feed, chickens and garden to care for. And there was love for one another in their home. They gathered around the old family organ and sang old time favorites and hymns, told stories, popped corn or made candy and had daily payer. There was a school and church as well as community sports and recreation.

Lydia, who had never been very well, passed away December 29, 1916. She was the mother of 14 children. Three years after her death, Henry Thomas married a young widow by the name of Jane Black Larsen who had two children by a former marriage. No children were born to this union. However, they adopted a baby boy who had been deserted by his parents.

Henry Thomas Stolworthy was an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, holding many positions in the church among which he was Senior High Councilor, President of the High Priests Quorum, and at the time of his death held the office of Patriarch. He was a friend to everyone and spent his life in service to others.

He said, "My life has been rich and full of experiences. I have witnessed the advancement of traffic from the ox team to the aeroplane, the light from the home made candle to electric light, from pony express to the wireless, from the sickle to the combined harvester. I have rejoiced in the advancement of science, knowing it to be the perfecting of God's plans, and I thank Him that I have been permitted to live in this great age."

"I am the father of twenty-two children. I have given the best years of my life to the rearing of my family, and have been repaid by seeing the feet of my children all planted firmly in the gospel path which leads to life eternal."

"With a heart filled with gratitude for these blessings, I have tried to bless and help God's

children here on earth, and I am amply repaid with the love and confidence of my brothers and sisters. Indeed I feel to say "God is a good Paymaster, He filled my days with good and crowned my years with peace and happiness. In closing I leave my blessings upon the head of my children and all my posterity, and say unto you, 'Be faithful; keep the commandments of God; walk in His way and find the peace of well doing, and we will meet and dwell as one great family in the great hereafter. Amen.'"

Henry Thomas Stolworthy died 22 December 1944 at Farmington, New Mexico.

Source: "Thomas Stolworthy 1828, English ancestors and American descendants" published 1993 by Geoffrey and Christopher Blake pgs 16-19.