

John Henry Walker

[223] John Henry Walker an Elder in Union Ward, son of Henry Walker and Ann Preece was born 6th September 1843 at Upper Bullingham Herefordshire, England. His parents accepted Mormonism in 1841 and emigrated to America in 1853 crossing the plains to Utah in Claudrus V. Spencer's Ox Company. They located in the 16th ward where they resided for a number of years. When they moved to South Cottonwood Ward, John H. remained with his father until 1862 when he enlisted in Captain Lot Smith's Company which was engaged in guarding the Overland Mail that year. Later he followed freighting by team through California and Montana, in 1864 he married Mary Ann Phillips and settled in Union, where he resided and had a family of eight children, four boys and four girls. Henry H. Walker was the only son of Henry and Ann Preece Walker. He was only 10 years of age when he came with his family to Utah. John H. didn't have much chance for education, however he did learn as the years rolled by, to read and write. He went to school a short time in Cottonwood, the teacher being Mr. Wm. Watkins.

After leaving school he and his father helped to build the Union Fort Wall. He helped his father on the farm herding cows over the sand hills barefooted, and often his lunch was only cold boiled pigweeds greens, carried in a sack. At one time he helped to haul tan bark from Bingham Canyon to Salt Lake City.

Often they were attacked by Indians on the way. As he grew older his responsibilities increased. While father was in Emigration Canyon defending his home against the Johnson Army, John aged about fourteen years, drove his mother [224] and Sisters and their possessions south to Beaver, Utah. There they remained until all danger of invasion was over. One summer, John, freighted a load of bacon from Mormon Island, (now Wilmington, California) to Virginia City, Montana. He drove an eight mule team and the round trip required nine months to complete.

Later when John served as a soldier in Lot Smith's Company to guard the overland mail from Sweet Water to Green River, he served five months during the Black Hawk Indian War. Some days they traveled only five miles as the snow was so deep. Sometimes the snow had water running under it and the men would get wet up to their waists. While on this duty he received a bullet in his knee which made him lame for the remainder of his life; for his service he was honored as a member of the G.A.R.

In 1895 John H. returned to England to serve as a missionary for his church. While there he visited the place of his birth. He also visited some of his mother's and father's people and explained the Gospel to them. The people who owned the Old home would not let him go inside the house as an old English law would have given him the right to claim the property as his own, had he stepped inside the door as he was his father's rightful heir. He told them they need have no fear for his family and home was in Utah and it was worth much more to him than the whole of England, but he did have his picture taken in front of the old home to preserve for future generations.

In 1897 he returned home. Later he was sent on a home missionary work in the Jordan Stake of Zion. He served as Constable of Union Precinct for eight years, and as Justice of the

Peace for two years. He labored on the farm all his life having purchased the old farm from his father's heirs. His useful life gave him an honored place in the community and he was sincerely mourned when he passed away on the 18th day of November 1915.

Snippet from: *Early Histories of Union Fort: Union Fort Camp*, put together by "members of the 'Union Fort Camp Daughters of the Utah Pioneers,'" including Edna Proctor Jensen, Thelma Proctor Hardman, Verl Walker Milne, Vera Peterson, Officers of D. U. P. 1971-1972