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Title: **1827-history-williamheaton-LHA-71**

Provenance:

Category: **Document**

Person: **LaVerna Heaton**

Date:

Laverna Heaton Allen family histories and papers

Papa's paternal grandfather, William Heaton, was the first Heaton LDS missionary. He was born in Little Horton, York, Bradford, Yorkshire, England. His father, Jonathan Heaton was born and died in Great Horton, York, 1794-1855.

When twenty-two, William was the first in this area to be baptized. Three months later with his brother, Jonathan, the two Beilby brothers, and three more converts, formed the Weldon Branch in 1849. In 1850, William was ordained an elder, given a license to preach and a certificate and asked to serve in the English countryside. From that time on he devoted his life to sharing the gospel. He talked about the second coming of Christ and the promise of God to Abraham. He explained how we too can become heirs of the same promise by faith in God and obedience to his laws.

He had never before been away from home until he joined the Church in April. In December, he attended a Conference in Bradford. When he saw his parents, brothers, and sisters in the audience, he couldn't describe his emotions, but he felt his heart swell with gratitude to his Father in Heaven for leading them all into the straight and narrow way that leads to eternal life. They had all joined in the new and everlasting covenant and greatly rejoiced to see me. They were all in good health.

The Beilby brothers had worked with him at times, but in 1851, Robert - age 30, Christopher -age 25, and Mary -24, with three other converts sailed from Liverpool to go to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Their younger sister, Esther, was lonesome and married William in three months, but lived with her parents as he went from village to village with his

"good news".

He tells of clergy opposition, of difficulty getting a room in a house or inn in a rain that turned into a downpour until he felt moved to try a place with a light. His despair changed to gladness when the single, young man offered to share his bed.

William accepted with thanks to his new friend and a silent one to God. He was soaked and it was after 11 P.M.

A Thomas Smith had listened to his talks several times. He did not believe repentance and baptism were necessary and said he would check with his head preacher. Primitive Methodist ministers objected to the church and prejudiced the people against it and William. No one in Ackland wanted him to talk in their homes so he talked to an attentive audience in a shed. Several offered their home for more meetings after.

When William heard his sister Rachel had died, he was shocked as he thought she was getting better when he last saw her. He was thankful for past blessings and that they could be together again as an eternal family. He prayed that he could continue working for the restitution of the gospel and that he would have the wisdom to perform his duty. He felt it was a difficult thing for people to put away the traditions of their father and believe God had sent a message from Heaven in this enlightened age, adding, "If a person come forth and professes inspiration from God, he is counted a fool or madman by the religious world, and they treat him as such," -but William continued to attract new members of the Church.

Everyone was too busy to listen by the end of August, so he helped his wife's father harvest. He mowed 16 acres of corn by hand.

Mary wrote they'd all had the fever (malaria) and Robert died. Her next letter from Council Bluff reported Christopher was also dead. She was leaving