

The Robert Sheen Story

This is Grandpa Taylor's (Lester Taylor) great grandfather.

## **HISTORY OF ROBERT SHEEN** (Came to Utah in 1856)

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Daughter of Utah Pioneers, Utah County

### History of Robert Sheen (Known as Shin in England)

Robert Sheen was born December 22, 1827, in Barrow, Wostershire, England; came to Salt Lake City, Utah, September 26, 1956, after a long voyage of unpleasant conditions. His father was James Robert Sheen, and his mother was Marie Loverge.

The Robert Sheen family lived in England, were born and reared there. They were hard-working people and had great perseverance, being born of very honest and energetic forefathers. He was a tiller of the soil, hired out to other people, He was faithful and very humble and therefore could always be employed.

He was of a cheerful nature, mild and gentle, took life for what it was, and was kind an good to his family. He was a lover of wild game, possessed a gun, and was a very good shot. By this means, the family never wanted for food of that kind. The food in

England was not so plentiful, so was rationed very closely, nor was means too plentiful, but a little was made to go a long way. His desire never was to become rich or wealthy but to live moderately, be comfortable and happy. He enjoyed his friends and fellowmen and he was always forgiving.

One day a different life occurred to his household when the Mormon Missionaries came bringing the truth to them. He was quick to decide, sometimes a little hasty, but this time he believed in them and saw the blessings at once upon the family. They were baptized--including two children who were old enough--being converted to the church by Apostle John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff.

Robert Sheen was married to Eliza Taylor, Daughter of John Taylor and Mary Ann Layland. They struggled on, and when the day came to leave England and what they had they were very happy.

Some of the relatives on the Sheen side came, and the ship they sailed on was called the "Enoch Tain", which sailed from Liverpool, England, on March 23, 1856. The ship carried five hundred and thirty-four aboard. The ship sailed for five weeks; under all kinds of circumstances. The Sheen family were so sea sick they thought they would never survive, but after several days were relieved, then some of them were troubled with fleas, which very much troubled them in England. Their food rations ran out, as they were rationed very closely, but the good people on the ship shared with them. At the journey's end they were glad to

be on land once more. They had made the voyage as comfortably as possible under the direction of James Fergerson. All the immigrants were to be looked after, which made quite a task for him.

The ship was an American vessel. The voyage ended at Boston on May 1. After five weeks and five days of sailing. They then rode by ship and by rail at two-day intervals. They traveled from New York to Iowa City, Iowa, when the journey across the plains was commenced by wagons and handcarts. Daniel Spencer acted as General Superintendent of emigration on the borders, assisted by General George D. Grant, William H. Kimball, James H. Har and others. John Taylor, whom they met at Illinois, soon found bread, cheese and food for them, as the children as well as the parents were very hungry. They all were as the rations gave out, and food had been shared to all alike.

The immigrants arrived fifteen minutes too late to catch the train from here. It was good luck for them as the bridge broke and the train and all went down in the Mississippi River. They remained at Iowa five weeks while the handcart making progressed, under the instruction of Thomas Williams of the company. At last they were walking their way. Flour was scarce in Iowa. After two days, traveling, they were very hungry and did not make headway, but at Council Bluffs they were again given food. From there, they went to Florence, Nebraska and stayed two weeks. The company was divided.

Captain Edmund Ellsworth was in charge of one company, and the other was under the direction of Daniel McArthur. Their traveling grew very tiresome. Hunger came upon them. The Sheen Family traveled under the direction of Captain Ellsworth. The youngest child of Robert Eliza Sheen died, Her name was Emma and she was two years old. The traveling stopped for the day, a casket was made, and in the later afternoon the child was buried. The parents wept, the company mourned, then before dusk was on its way, sad but willing to look to the future. The other children were growing tired and the one little girl, Ann age nine, had walked all the distance and never made a complaint. Her little shoes were thin when starting out and by this time were all worn from her feet. Through the hot sand she still went happily on her way barefooted.

Their company left Iowa June 9. McArthurs's company left Iowa June 11. They were the first two handcart companies. They arrived at Salt Lake City, Friday September 26, where they were met and welcomed by the First Presidency of the church and a large concourse of citizens, a brass band, and a company of lancers. I am sure the companies deserved the welcome they received. They had risked their lives from the tiresome and dangerous traveling on the desert, as so many wild animals were shot. The hot sun and weather conditions prevailed.

From Salt Lake City the Robert Sheen Family (also his brother who had buried his wife at Florence and his family that had

traveled in the same company) went north to Ogden, settled at North Ogden, (then called Ogden's Hole). There a son was born to the Robert Sheen family. They lived there two or more years, then started south, arriving in Payson, Utah County, April 1858, where their children Eliza and Matilda were born.

In the year 1864, the family move to Salem, then known as Pond Town. Here the family had to look forward and with a greater determination they began to make a better living and soon were better off than in Payson where they had lived under not the best circumstances. The wife had taken some training as a midwife in Payson from Mrs. Cutler, to which she was adapted, as her mother in England had the same ability, through this, she helped many families, and when she received a few dollars it helped her family.

The farm which they first possessed was taken care of. In 1875 a threshing machine was bought (from a company of men who were not able to operate it) by Robert Sheen and William Davis, Sr., who operated it. In time, both men were getting on nicely and had homes, much farming ground, horses, and cows all of which they had earned through hard work and long days and the blessings of God, to whom they were thankful throughout their voyage and the many hardships they had gone through.

Gardens, fruit trees, and berries of all sorts were planted by Robert Sheen; cherry trees, too, the fruit of which the boys liked to take without asking. This was not so pleasant to one who had

struggled so diligently, when just for the asking they might have been more welcome. The fruits had to be picked for the peddlers of early days; the potatoes had to be dug, which came after the crops of grain and threshing were done--not as today, of course. But by the horsepower which turned the separator. This took five teams of horses.

Robert Sheen, my grandfather, had a sleigh which was very handy (when old Billy the horse was hitched on to take Grandma out to the delivery of a new baby or to take care of a mother and baby that had been born earlier. The sleigh, too, was handy to take a sack of wheat or eggs, butter, etc. and do a little trading at the co-op store or for the trip to Payson.

A bob sleigh, too, was owned by grandfather, which was used on the farm, on the several feet of snow, to go get a ton or two of coal, a load of posts, or some wood. Other implements were owned by Robert--a corn sheller, etc., --in fact, implements of all kinds were owned by him, which were willingly loaned,

but they must be brought back in good condition. He was generous but expected one's word to be depended upon.

His life was so adjusted that he was agreeable and could be relied on. As I remember, he got along peacefully with his fellow men, believed each one was given free agency to do as he chose. He was willing to help those who came from England. He would share what he had, and was very happy to do so, as he had not forgotten how hard and persevering it had been for him in getting a start. He had a very happy nature, enjoyed life, and liked to hunt.

He lost one of his thumbs early in life as the result of a shotgun going off in his hands. It could have been worse, but just took off the thumb on one hand. Without this, it seems his work went on normally, and he could shoot rabbits, which he was fond of, and in those days rabbits were plentiful. He was fond of seeing horse racing, which was very popular in those days, liked circuses, too, or a good ballgame, all of which kept him cheerful and in a happy mood.

He was very sincere, believed in dreams. One time a man had been missing in Payson, when they lived there. The man had been digging in a sandbank for some formation and had been buried alive. Robert had a dream of his plight in a certain place; when he heard of their hunting for him, he told them of his dream, and sure enough, it was where he had visioned it.

The family of Robert Sheen was very obedient. he was very strict, and they respected him very much. As I remember each one of them always called him "Father" and their mother "Mother." They taught their children to be very industrious and willing to work. The girls were all taught to be good wives and mothers and rejoiced when children were born to them. They taught them and gave to them counsel and the things of life that could be afforded for the betterment of their lives. They were educated to be cultured and intelligent. The girls were given the talents of the mother--they were good nurses all through their lives, helping in sickness, death, etc.

Their only boy was an expert at anything he worked at--machinery, blacksmithing, farming and has proven that doing is learning one's self what could not have been accomplished in any other way. It also helps one to stand on his own footing, and in doing so, he is given the intelligence from God, which these early pioneers had. The still small voice led and directed those honest in heart in their achievements.

Robert Sheen was stricken with illness after attending a political rally held at the school house, from which he never recovered. He died October 30, 1895, at his home in Salem, Utah. His funeral was held in the school house, which served as a church building. He was buried in the Salem Cemetery, in the family plot.

He still was of the spirit and had never neglected his church duties. He died with a clear conscience, leaving his aged widow to carry on. He had lived a rich life, used all the talents given him and by no means, had faltered through life.

(This history written by a granddaughter who was born in 1885 and remembers his activities since old enough, and truths are in every word written. The home still stands built by his strong hands and intelligent mind).