



Ira Stearns Hatch

An interesting life sketch of Ira Stearns Hatch was found online:⁷⁸

Pioneer of 1849

When the News of the successful venture of the Pilgrim Fathers' reached the homeland, other honest, sincere people were seized with a desire to also seek a haven of religious freedom in the new land.

The Hatches were mostly middle class, neither rich nor poor, mostly small landowners and farmers, pious industrious people, in fact good citizens. One of the descendants of the above mentioned Hatches was Ira Hatch, the son of Jeremiah and Mary Stearns Hatch, who was born at Tolland, Tolland, Connecticut in 1772. The family later moved to Winchester, Cheshire, New Hampshire, where a son, Ira Stearns, was born to Ira Hatch and Lucinda Rice Hatch on February 9, 1800.

The early settlers of our country were constantly on the lookout for opportunities to better themselves temporally, so the Hatch family again pushed out and established themselves in the sparsely settled, heavy timbered western part of New York State at a place named Farmersville, Cattaraugus. Here the family spent much time and energy clearing the land. The boy, Ira Stearns, when but eleven years old, made himself useful in the community by supplying wood for seven families whose husbands and fathers were engaged in the War of 1812.

On January 26, 1825 Ira Stearns married Wealtha Bradford, a daughter of Simeon Bradford and Martha True, who was born at Turner, Oxford, Maine in 1803. Wealtha was a direct descendant of William Bradford, the second Governor of the Plymouth Colony. This couple resided on the Hatch Farmstead at Farmersville, where the following seven children were born: Meltiah, July 15, 1825, Ransom, November 13, 1826, Orin, May 9, 1830, Rhoana, May 19, 1832, Ira, August 5, 1835, Ephraim, November 30, 1837, and Ancel, June 9, 1840.

Being averse to the intolerance of the religious leaders of the day and satisfied to live peaceful, honest, industrious lives, these people did not affiliate themselves with any

⁷⁸ From <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hatch/ISH.html>, by Edith Folsom Hatch (1937) and edited by Jason Hatch (2001).

religious sect. When the early missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were preaching the gospel to the Cattaraugus Indians, the Ira Stearns Hatch family had the privilege of hearing the gospel message and readily accepted it. Wealtha, who was the first to read the Book of Mormon and recognize it as truth, wished to join the Church immediately, but her husband advised waiting on the account of the persecutions. Ira and Wealtha were baptized in 1832, and were the only members of the Hatch family in those parts to join the unpopular faith.

Soon after this time the construction of the Kirtland Temple was commenced and they soon decided to make a contribution to it. Ira was also very eager to visit the Prophet Joseph and feel the spirit of the man, so they prepared to make the trip to Kirtland, taking their contribution of \$200.00 with them. Three days were required to make the trip and upon arriving at Kirtland Ira inquired for the Prophet. After being informed that he could be found in the grove where they were cutting timber for the Temple, Ira Stearns made his way to that place. As he approached the workmen, one of them stuck his axe into a tree and came toward him. When close enough he shook the hand of Ira Stearns Hatch and said "Brother Hatch, I have been expecting you for three days; the money you have brought will be used to build the pulpit in the Temple." Thus, left with no chance for doubt, Ira Stearns Hatch was convinced that Joseph Smith was indeed a true Prophet, and his testimony was steadfast for the remainder of his life. No one in Kirtland was acquainted with Ira nor knew of his visit with the Prophet.

Ira returned to his home and in 1836 with his wife was given a blessing by Joseph Smith Sr. Later he returned to Kirtland to assist in the building of the Temple and on July 4, 1838 was ordained a Teacher in the Priesthood. In 1840 the family joined the Saints at a place near which the beautiful city of Nauvoo was to be founded. They lived at Eaton Farm on Job's Creek, Hancock, Illinois, at which place Wealtha was stricken and died on November 3, 1841, of a fever that was epidemic among the Saints. Thus leaving Ira with the responsibility of a family of young children.

In 1842, Ira Stearns Hatch was ordained an Elder. He and his oldest son, Meltiah were members of the Nauvoo Legion. At the time of the expulsion from Nauvoo, the Hatches went with the Saints and made their home at Bonary Lake on the Missouri River. While living there, recruits for the Mormon Battalion were called for and Ira's sons Meltiah, who was 21 years old, and Orin, who was just 16 years and 2 months, were enlisted as members of Company C. The Hatch family left without the assistance of these two young men was unable to accompany the Saints to the Rocky Mountains at that time, so they rented a farm near St. Joseph, Missouri, where they remained until the summer of 1849.

About one year after the death of his first wife, Ira Stearns Hatch married Abigail Whitney, who in February 1847 gave birth to a son and both mother and child died. After their discharge from the Mormon Battalion, Meltiah and Orin journeyed eastward to the Rocky Mountains, the gathering place of the Saints. Coming over the route followed by the California Gold seekers around the north end of the Great Salt Lake, they went directly to Sessions Settlement (present day Bountiful, Davis, Utah) where they found that there was little opportunity to obtain a suitable piece of land on which to locate. Upon going about one and fourth miles west of the Settlement, they found a spring upon which they made

some minor improvements and camped near it for some five weeks or from the latter part of July until the last of August 1847-48. Early in September of the same year, they resumed their journey eastward to the Missouri River, where they had left their loved ones.

With their assistance, the Hatch family was able to make the preparations to immigrate to the Rocky Mountains, which journey they commenced on July 4, 1849. They were members of the Enoch Reese Ten of the Taylor Allen Company, which company after three months of time filled with usual incidents of pioneers journeys, arrived in the valley just prior to the

October Conference of 1849.

Soon after their arrival, the Hatch family was taken to the land adjacent to land upon which Meltiah and Orin camped on in the summer of 1848. Here they erected a Log cabin and were soon comfortably established with daughter Rhoana, the Miss Hatch in Utah in 1849 as the housekeeper. The spring near which they settled was some three hundred yards south of what was in 1939 the O.S.L. Depot at Woods Cross, Davis, Utah, and the one hundred sixty acres of land to which they acquired a squatters right extended one fourth mile south of what in 1939 was the Deseret Livestock Street and one mile west of the State Highway.

On November 27, 1852, Ira Stearns Hatch married Jane Tinto Bee, a widow with three children, who had recently immigrated to the area from Scotland. Eight children were born to them, Stearns, Philander, Abram, Rueben, Lucinda Jennette, Leonard, Ira Etta, and Alvin Willard.

On March 20, 1857, Ira Stearns Hatch married Jan Ann Stuart, a handcart emigrant from Scotland. Three children were born to them, Wealtha, Gilbert Stuart, and Stephen Cornelius.

Most of the children of Ira Stearns Hatch and his three wives, married and located near their original home in Utah. Their descendants are numerous and have helped in the settling of many new communities in the intermountain region from Canada on the north to Mexico on the south, where they are known for their honesty and integrity, filling many important positions both civil and ecclesiastical.

Ira Stearns Hatch's son Ira performed missionary labors among the Indians from his early manhood until his death. He spoke 13 languages and spent most of life working with the Indians in Southern Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. Another son Ephraim, served in the Black Hawk War. Ransom, Orin, Ephraim, and Ancel married pioneer women and settled in Woods Cross; Rhoana married James Henrie and settled permanently in Panguitch, Utah.

Ira Stearns Hatch was appointed one of the three trustees of the first day school established in Bountiful, Utah in March 1850. He and his sons were associated in farming,

stock raising, dairying, brick making, and sheep raising, thus helping in the establishment of the great intermountain commonwealth. Ira was ever mindful of the weary emigrants and to many of them he gave material assistance. The Indians were very proud to own him as their friend and called him "Bobuke", meaning "truly a great man".

Ira Stearns Hatch was always true to the faith he embraced. He was a true friend of the Indians. At the close of his life he was a weary traveler. He was found dead one morning lying by his wife. He had passed to the great beyond September 30, 1869, after a long and useful and active life.