

**JOSEPH W. MUSSER**

1872-1954

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JOURNAL OF  
JOSEPH WHITE MUSSELER

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

I was born on the south-east corner of Motor Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah, on 2nd East between South Temple and First South Streets, where my mother then lived, March 8, 1872. My father, Amos Milton Musser, of Swiss Dutch extraction, was born at Donegal Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, May 20, 1830; and my mother, Mary Elizabeth White, was born at Garden Grove, Iowa, November 7, 1846, while her folks were fleeing from the mobs that drove the Saints from Nauvoo, Illinois.

My father was one of the youthful defenders of Nauvoo in 1846. At the age of 21, he brought his widowed mother, with her children, across the plains to Utah, settling at Salt Lake City.

My mother's folks had settled at Beaver, where Father met her on his trips throughout the Territory as Traveling Bishop for the Church. They were married October 1, 1864. She became the mother of ten children, seven sons and three daughters, I being the fifth. She died from an accident in the home at the age of 85.

She was the acme of refinement, possessing the graces of a real queen; beautiful of features, strong in purpose, staunch in the faith-- a Latter-day Saint with a personality that at once commanded respect, confidence, and love. She was the first plural wife of Father, and she lived her (life) nobly, not only raising her own family but also the children of two other mothers who "passed on." Her foster children loved her dearly; they were as her own flesh and blood.

My father, a polished gentleman, self-educated, courageous, stable, self-reliant but humble, was a pillar in the Church and withal a fighter. He was severely kind and severely stern. With him the Gospel of Jesus Christ headed the list of MUSTS: "love thy neighbor as thyself" was uppermost in his life and actions. Once, I recall, when a position was offered his son who was soliciting work, he said, "Widow Smith's son is capable and needs the position more than you do; let him have it." The job went to Widow Smith's son.

We had a large city lot--two of them in fact, where we lived (in the southeast part of the city, corner of 7th South and 8th East.) Much of the ground was used as pasture for our cows and horses. The neighboring boys asked the privilege of playing ball on the plot. Father said to a delegation of boys, "I will buy you balls, bats, gloves, etc., and let you use this ground as much as you wish if you will make me a promise and faithfully keep it." "Good; and what's the promise?" "That

was to keep a record of all persecutive acts, and the names of the persecuters of those acts, against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (See Doctrine and Covenants, Section 123).

For years he acted as Traveling Bishop for the Church. He was Superintendent of and built the Deseret Telegraph lines in Utah, which provided the means of communication from practically all the settlements with headquarters. He was Fish and Game Commissioner for the Territory under Federal appointment, for a number of years; was Superintendent of the Silk Industry, and was a brick manufacturer

In 1852 Father was sent to India on a mission. He spent five years abroad working entirely without purse and script. He circumnavigated the earth--going from Salt Lake City west, via San Pedro and San Francisco, California and returning via New York.

He spent six months in the penitentiary and paid a fine of \$300 for acknowledging his wives and caring for the mothers of his children. He did much writing and propoganda work for the Church, among his writings being "The Palantic", a monthly magazine, "Fruits of Mormonism" and "Mormonism Exposed", "Race Suicide vs Children;" He launched the initial number of the "Utah Farmer." He died at the age of 79, from a surgical operation.

Coming from such an ancestry and being raised in a polygamous atmosphere, by parents devoted to their religious conception, I naturally inherited and imbibed a strong spiritual nature. From early youth I devoted my time to the Church. I believed intensely in the mission of Joseph Smith, and were it possible to become fanatical in accepting the decrees of the Almighty, I have been fanatically religious, but not obdurate toward the religion and actions of others nor offensively dogmatic.

Since the year 1880 I have been active in the Church and its auxilliaries, and in the kingdom of God, beginning with the Primary Association where, at the age of eight, I was secretary, my mother being in the Presidency of the Association in the First Ward. From that I became a deacon--the President of the Quorum; a Teacher and a Priest; the President of the Y.M.M.I.A., Assistant Superintendent of the Sunday School; Ward Missionary; Stake Secretary of the Y.M.M.I.A., a member of the Stake Superintendency of Y.M.M.I.A., and then Stake Superintendent of the organization; Stake Tithing Clerk, High Councilor, President of a Branch of the Church in the Uinta Basin; a missionary to the Southern States and Assistant in the mission office. I spent seven months in the Utah State Penitentiary and at this writing am a parolee of that institution, for acknowledging as my wives and supporting more than one woman and their children.

I have 21 children by the following mothers:

CHILDREN OF ROSE: Rose Jr., Joseph B., Mae Loraine, Neil B., Ruth B., Bertha B., Anna B., and Gertrude B.

CHILDREN OF MARY: Mary H., Naomi H., Blanche H., Guy H., Priscilla H., and Helen H.



