

THOMAS JAMES DUNN

Thomas James Dunn was born January 2, 1822, at Phelps, Ontario County, New York. He was the son of James Dunn and Sally Barker. He was baptized May 28, 1839, by J. H. Adams and ordained a Priest June 8, 1839, by J. M. Adams at Lavonia, Wayne County, Michigan.

On July 1, 1840, at Lavonia, Michigan, he married Betsie Briggs, a daughter of Pardon and Betsie Briggs. Betsie was born April 22, 1821, in the state of New York. They had one daughter, Betsie A., who was born May 21, 1841. Thomas Dunn lost his wife Betsie in death on August 5, 1841, at La Harpe, Hancock County, Illinois. He and Betsie had migrated with the saints to Nauvoo in 1840, where Thomas was called to labor on the Nauvoo Temple.

It was while he was in Nauvoo that he met the Prophet Joseph Smith. Thomas Dunn was quoted as saying, "It was one of the happiest days of my life to meet one reserved to fill the important place, to usher in the great dispensation of the fulness of times. The impression of the Prophet Joseph and his task were both solemn and great."

On January 31, 1841, while in Nauvoo, Thomas was ordained a Seventy by Joseph Young. In 1842 he met and married Harriet A. Carter, a daughter of John and Betsie Carter. Harriet was born February 4, 1819, at West Fort, Vermont. Her family had also gathered with the saints in Illinois. While in and around the Nauvoo, Illinois, area, Thomas and Harriet had three children, namely, Thomas James, Harriet Alvaretta, and Harvey Alvaron, the last two being twins. On October 27, 1845, his daughter Betsie A., by his first wife Betsie Briggs, died at the age of 4½ years.

When the saints were forced to vacate Nauvoo after enduring much persecution, Thomas and his family moved on west to Council Bluffs. While there, another son was born to them by the name of John S. While waiting for the opportunity to go still farther west, a call was made by the United States Government for volunteers to go to California to help defend the borders against Mexico, should the Mexican War become a greater threat to the United States. Brother Dunn, feeling the importance of the call to service, decided to volunteer. He, along with 500 others, enlisted and helped form what was called the great Mormon Battalion. Most of the men were younger, and some were hand-picked by Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and other church leaders. Thomas was 24 years of age. They started their great 2,000-mile march by foot to California in the summer of 1846. They planned their march through what are now the States of Kansas, New Mexico, and Arizona, and into California.

While on the trek there were times when food rations became low. Some of the men had large foot sores from worn-out boots. Some became ill on the route, and a few lacked the stamina to complete the long march. These men were sent to the settlements in Pueblo, Colorado, and in the Salt Lake

The rest of the band, including Thomas, reached California and spent the winter of 1846-47 there. Thomas Dunn was discharged honorably as a corporal on July 16, 1847. After being discharged from the Battalion, Thomas left Los Angeles in a company led by Levi Hancock, to meet the saints coming west from Council Bluffs and Far West. While en route, they were met by Samuel Brannan, a wagon train master, and were told that Brother Dunn's family had not come west with the fall emigration. Brother Dunn, with some of the other Battalion men, decided to return to California, where they went to Sacramento. Here they spent the winter of 1847-48 and saw the beginning of the great "Gold Rush." However, Thomas was not particularly interested in gold, and he was very desirous of seeing his family again. He anxiously journeyed to Salt Lake City, arriving there on September 8, 1848, along with some of the other Battalion men. To his great disappointment, he once again failed to find his family there. They still hadn't come west with the saints.

After spending about ten days in Salt Lake City, he and seven of his companions started east for Council Bluffs. They arrived there on November 3, 1848, and Thomas spent the rest of the winter reunited with his family at last in Council Bluffs. On May 18, 1850, he and his family left the Missouri River Valley with a company of emigrants going to California. Brother Dunn found an opportunity to leave with this band of people, although there is no reference in church history to the name of the leader of this train. They arrived in Salt Lake City on July 11, 1850, which was considered very good time.

The Dunn family settled for a time a little north of Ogden, Weber County, and were very active in the church. When the North Ogden Branch was organized December 22, 1852, Thomas J. Dunn was ordained a High Priest by Loren Farr, and set apart to preside over the Branch. Soon afterwards, he was ordained a Bishop by President Brigham Young to preside over the North Ogden Ward, which was then organized. He and his wife Harriet had two more children, Samuel Crandall, and a girl named Pamela.

In the year 1856, Thomas Dunn was appointed a State Representative from Weber County, the district he now represented. He had an illustrious legislative career. He also held many other civic positions.

On April 2, 1857, he married Charlotte Campbell, daughter of Joel and Meranda Campbell. Charlotte had migrated west with her family from Harrisville, Ohio. Thomas and Charlotte were married in the Salt Lake Endowment House. As the Church at this time was practicing polygamy, it is believed that his second wife, Harriet Carter Dunn, was still living. Charlotte was born September 12, 1839, in Harrisville, Medina County, Ohio.

While in Utah during the next six years, Thomas and Charlotte Dunn had two children and adopted a foster daughter. Their daughter, Seanie, was born in 1861. Another daughter, Florinda, was born May 11, 1862. Their foster daughter, whom they raised as a Dunn, was named Lettie. All three girls, according to record, were born in Ogden, including Lettie.

In 1863, the family moved to Bear Lake, Idaho, where Thomas became one of the pioneers of that region. He also made peace with the hostile Indians that were roaming in that area. While in Idaho, Thomas and Charlotte had four more children. Oliver Cowdery (named after the former church leader) was born August 20, 1866; they had two daughters, Eve and Altha, and another son, Lennie. Their birth dates are not known.

It was approximately at this time that Thomas married another woman, adding her to his present family. There is very little known about her, except she was a gentle woman about 35 years old. Her name was Lucinda Rose. She bore no children, but was a fine companion for the whole family.

In 1870 Thomas moved his family to Park Valley, Box Elder County, Utah. As a pioneer settler he resided there for twelve years. In 1882 the Dunns moved once again, to Oakley, Cassia County, Idaho, where he became a member of the Cassia Stake High Council. On November 10, 1902, Thomas J. Dunn was ordained a Patriarch by Apostle John Henry Smith.

Thomas lived his last years fulfilling his life of service to the Church, until he died at the age of 88 years in Salt Lake City, on August 1, 1910. His wife, Charlotte, died three years later in Salt Lake City, August 3, 1913.