

## HISTORY OF



### ALEXANDER BECKSTEAD

**BORN:** 16 March 1802 at Williamsburg, Dundas, Ontario, Canada

**PARENTS:** Francis Beckstead & Margaret Barkley

**PIONEER:** 15 September 1849 arrived at Salt Lake Valley

**SPOUSE:** Catherine Lince (1<sup>st</sup> of three)

**MARRIED:** 25 January 1823 at Williamsburg, Dundas, Ontario, Canada

**DIED:** 20 February 1870 at West Jordan, Salt Lake, Utah

### CATHERINE LINCE

**BORN:** 06 July 1807 at Williamsburg, Dundas, Ontario, Canada

**PARENTS:** Bartholomew Luce & Nancy Castleman

**PIONEER:** 15 September 1849 arrived at Salt Lake Valley

**SPOUSE:** Alexander Beckstead

**MARRIED:** 25 January 1823 at Williamsburg, Dundas, Ontario, Canada

**DIED:** 12 November 1889 at West Jordan, Salt Lake, Utah

# ALEXANDER BECKSTEAD & CATHERINE LINCE

*by Compiled by Barbara Winward Seager July 1997*

Alexander Beckstead, son of Francis Beckstead Sr. and Margaret Barkley, was born in Schoharie County, New York on the 16th of March, 1802. He was the sixth of 21 children. His mother died after her 11th child was born, and his father remarried. There were 10 children from the second marriage to Catherine Lang. When Alexander was very young, his family moved to Williamsburg, Canada, where his father secured 200 acres of land under a land grant. It is assumed therefore, that Alexander worked with his father on the farm until he was married in 1823 to Catherine Lince, at which time he farmed for himself. He and Catherine had 15 children.

During the period of 1837-38 three Mormon missionaries visited the homes of Alexander, his father, Francis Sr., and others of the family. Most of them accepted the Gospel, sold their land, and made preparations to join the Saints who were then located in Missouri. They traveled by ox-team and wagons, enduring many personal hardships, and finally reached DeWitt, Caldwell County, Missouri the last week in September 1838. (See history of Francis.) At that time the Saints were being persecuted severely by the mobs, and shortly thereafter, our families escaped to Far West, Missouri, where they spent the winter. The following spring, 1839, they moved with the Saints to the area near Nauvoo, Illinois. Our families located wherever they could find suitable places to make a home--some at Lima, some at Carthage, and some at Warsaw. All of these places are near Nauvoo. By this time Alexander and Catherine's family consisted of nine children. When Francis died, Alexander and his brother, Francis Jr., were left to oversee the care of the families, and later, their journey to the Salt Lake Valley.

History tells us that the latter part of 1845 and the beginning of 1846, was a time of preparation of the Saints for the exodus from Nauvoo. Even the children were involved, parching corn and taking it to the mill to be ground. Since several Beckstead children were born in the Nauvoo area at this time, we can assume our people were involved in these preparations. The exodus from Nauvoo began in February 1846. Some crossed the Mississippi River by watercraft, while others crossed when the river was frozen. We can only imagine the sadness in their hearts as they left this beautiful city and their homes. The exact date our ancestors arrived in the area of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, a distance of about 400 miles from Nauvoo, is not known. However, the main body of the Saints reached there by the middle of June 1846.

Almost immediately upon their arrival, the United States Government requested President Brigham Young to furnish 500 volunteers for the Mormon Battalion to fight in the Mexican War. Three of the Beckstead boys joined this group, thus reducing the help that was needed to look after the families. Alexander was not discouraged, however, and commenced preparation for movement of the families to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Just as they were leaving, and had gone only a short distance, Francis Jr. was stricken with cholera, and died after a few hours of illness. He was buried on the banks of the Missouri River. This was a great shock and a tremendous loss to the families. Alexander

now had the full responsibility for the movement of the families to the Salt Lake Valley. He had a large family of young children to look after, as well as helping his younger brothers and sisters with their families. Tragedy and sadness continued with the families as they journeyed westward. As they neared Wood River, Nebraska, Alexander's sister, Sarah Louise Beckstead Forbush, was stricken with cholera and died almost immediately, leaving four little children.

The families were determined in their efforts, however, and finally arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, September 15, 1849. They settled near relatives or close friends in the Cottonwood area, east of Murray, helping one another provide food for the families. In the spring of 1850 Alexander moved to the west side of the Jordan River. He purchased 160 acres of land which extended from where the D&RG Railroad is now located, southward along the river to Riverton. A number of the groups located along the river because it was their only source of water.

They were obliged to live in dugouts for a short time, then houses of adobe until they could haul timber from the mountains to build log houses. They dug wells for drinking water, and immediately provided a meeting house for worship, and a school house, very meager but adequate. Later they built the "Beckstead Ditch" and were able to get water from the river onto their lands. As they prospered, they built better houses.

Sometime before 1853, Alexander erected the first blacksmith shop in that area. The following year, Alexander entered into plural marriage. Keziah Albine Petty, age 19, became his second wife on 18 November 1854. She became the mother of 10 children, and was 72 when she died. Clarissa Ann Gilson was 35 when she married Alexander on 3 February 1856. She had seven children. Clarissa died at age 73.

Alexander was thus the father of 32 children, and his large posterity can now be found in many areas of the LDS church, honoring their great heritage. During the period 1861 to 1863 Alexander assisted materially in sending outfits back to the Missouri River to help the Saints in the movement West. During the hard times when flour cost \$25 a sack, Alexander, instead of selling his flour, divided it among the poor. It is reported that on one occasion he sent his son John with 5000 pounds of flour to the poor people in the St. George, Utah area--without cost to them.

Alexander was a faithful Elder in the LDS Church during his entire life, and a friend to everyone in need. He passed away at his home in West Jordan, 25 February 1870, and was buried in the South Jordan Cemetery.

Source: *Descendants of John Beckstead* by Lee Allen Beckstead -1963