

History Question of the Month

What early Butler resident also owned property in East Canyon where they operated a saw mill?

Answer

Joseph Smith Maxfield was the ninth of eleven children born to John Ellison Maxfield and Sarah Elisabeth Baker. He was born in Bedeque, Prince Edward Island, Canada, on January 13, 1847. After the family joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they left their beautiful and comfortable home and traveled to Winter Quarters, Iowa, where they arrived in the summer of 1850. While crossing the Missouri river, Joseph's brother, Jesse, who was six years old, slipped off of a plank as they were ferried across the river and drowned. A week later, his brother Benjamin, who was just a year old, also died. He was buried on the banks of the river. The family spent a very long, cold winter at Winter Quarters waiting to travel to the Salt Lake Valley the next spring. They traveled with the John G. Smith Company. When they reached Hams Fork Wyoming, Joseph's mother was too ill to travel any farther, she remained in Hams Fork where she gave birth to a son. She rejoined her family after she regained her health. The rest of the family, after, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley on September 23, 1851, spent the winter near Murray. They finally settled in what is now West Jordan (about 6400 South and 1300 West.)

On September 12, 1870, Joseph married Matilda Ann Turpin. Matilda was the daughter of Jesse Turpin and Eliza Ann Boggess. She was born in Harrison County, Virginia on July 22, 1853. Her family lived in Nauvoo, before being driven out. They came to Utah in 1848. After her father died in 1854, her mother married Peter Van Valkenberg as a plural wife. They lived in Union.

Joseph and Matilda made their home in Butler. During the summers, they spent their time in East Canyon where they also owned property. Joseph had a saw mill, where he sawed and hauled pine ties for the rail road in Park City. He also herded cattle, horses and sheep owned by the people in Salt Lake, to the canyon and then returned them in the fall. About 1912, Joseph and Matilda along with several of their children moved to the Idaho Falls area. Joseph died September 28, 1923 in Idaho. He was buried in the Murray Cemetery. His wife, Matilda died September 25, 1935, in Idaho, she too was buried in the Murray Cemetery.

Joseph and Matilda had 13 children, 2 of which died in tragic accidents. Andrew was struck by lightning and Gerald had carbolic acid spilled on him.

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