

Thomas Innes
The Immigration of His Family
& Settling in Idaho

written by Julie Cannon Markham, a great-great-granddaughter

In the summer of 1850, thirty-four year old Thomas Innes and two of his sisters, Jane and Charlotte, left Liverpool on the ship *Waterloo*. Jane was six years older than Thomas; both were single. Charlotte, the youngest sister, and her husband William Thews, were also on the ship with their three children, the oldest being six. The *Waterloo* docked in New York City on July 31, 1850. Charter ships organized by LDS agents did not travel until 1852, so at this time the family was traveling independently. Thomas, a graduate of the University of Scotland,¹ had joined the LDS Church the previous year. It doesn't appear that his sisters were Mormons, as they later joined an Episcopal church in Idaho. Emigrating to Zion was not the only reason people were willing to leave everything behind and spend two months on a cramped ship. To millions of Europeans, America was a beacon for a better life, temporally if not also spiritually..

Thomas traveled as far as Pennsylvania, settling in Elizabethtown, one hundred miles west of Philadelphia. There he worked for a coal mining company. Because Thomas's widowed father and a third sister, both members of the LDS Church, were still in England, Thomas chose to wait in Pennsylvania so he could help them cross the interior of the United States for Utah. Likely the plan was for them to follow soon, but they did not immigrate for five more years. They sailed on the ship *Juventa*, an LDS charter ship filled with Mormon immigrants and returning European missionaries. Charles was seventy-six years old at the time of this voyage. Mary, almost ten years older than Thomas, sailed with her husband James Robson and three sons using Perpetual Emigration Funds.² Their oldest son, still a teenager, had emigrated the previous year with other members of the Church, also borrowing from the PEF. This particular son of Mary's, namesake of his grandfather Charles, had apprenticed in England as a paper maker for ten years, becoming quite proficient. He established the first paper mill in Utah, became a bishop and later, in colonizing Arizona, served in a stake presidency until his death.

While waiting for his family, Thomas met and married Margarette Jane Louttit. Margaret was thirteen years younger than Thomas and about 23 when they married in 1853. She immigrated to America with her two brothers, John and James the previous year. Her father was a ship builder and master of the ship *The Little Active*. Also in this family were two sisters who both stayed in England. Jane died unmarried, but Mary, just a few years younger than Margarette, remained close to the Methodist Church and raised a family. Her descendants are still in England today.³

¹Daughter Mary wrote that her father Thomas received a "splendid education," graduating from the University of Scotland.

² Mary and James Robson buried four children, one just a few months before they sailed.

³Hilary Ford, a great-great-granddaughter of Mary Louttit, contacted me via email after finding an early version of this biography online and provided this information. She said her family had always been Methodist.

Margarette's father James, like Thomas's father Charles, was widowed. He had remarried in England after his wife's death and had two more children. I struggled to learn more about the Louttit family, so I was surprised in 2010 to receive an email from Hilary Ford, a great-great-granddaughter of Margarette's sister Mary. Hilary believed John, James and Margerette came to the US for a better life, and possibly to join the LDS Church. So, perhaps they were LDS converts also waylaid in Pennsylvania. Margarette's brother James, who chose to remain in Pennsylvania with his brother John, had several sons, one named Alma and another named Moroni. A nephew named a son Mormon.

In May of 1855, the *Juventa* docked at the port of Philadelphia and the travelers were met by Thomas, who took his father into his home. The *Juventa* was the first LDS charter ship to sail to Philadelphia, and the voyage had gone so well this was considered a promising new route for LDS immigrants. Mary and her husband continued on to Utah with their fellow passengers, traveling by train to Pittsburgh, and then by steamboat to St. Louis. From there they met up with a wagon train led by Richard Ballantyne, reaching the Salt Lake Valley in September, ending their six month journey from England to their new home. They settled in the farming community of Plain City, north of Ogden.

By 1860, Thomas had moved his family, which included his father, further west to Pittsburgh. His children were Emma, 7, Charles (our ancestor), 5, and Thomas, 3. Mary was born that year. Thomas's sister Jane had married a widower and was possibly living near their sister Mary and her family in the Midwest. Eventually these two sisters were among the early settlers of Boise, Idaho. There are several references to these family members in St. Michael's Episcopal Church there.

Thomas's daughter Mary later recorded that her family was well situated in Pennsylvania. By this time Thomas was a mining engineer with the title of Inspector. Still, Thomas and Margaret made the decision to leave her family in Pennsylvania and make the two thousand mile journey to Utah. There could have been many practical reasons in addition to a faithful desire to gather. The latter half of the 1850s was filled with calls for war by the federal government against the Mormons in Utah Territory. This would have been a factor in delaying their trip west. Federal troops, under the direction of Sidney Johnston, had marched west in 1857 to quell what some believed was a Mormon revolt. In 1858 the inhabitants of northern Utah moved south to the Provo river bottoms, likely including Thomas's sister Mary and her family. By 1858 this drastic situation was resolved, but many realized that the United States was on the verge of erupting in civil war. Thomas may have felt the time was right to move his family to the safety of Utah Territory. Church records show that Margarette was baptized in May of 1860 by a local missionary. Perhaps her conversion was the key to their leaving Pennsylvania. It appears she never looked back, as she was a faithful and courageous pioneer for the rest of her life.

Seventy years later daughter Mary wrote a tender poem about her family's trek from Pittsburgh to Salt Lake City.¹ From her verses we learn that they left Pennsylvania in June of 1861 and traveled via train, boat and wagon nine hundred miles west to Florence, Nebraska, where Mormon agents were organizing wagon trains and handcart companies heading to the Salt Lake Valley. Once they reached Nebraska, the family joined John R. Murdock's wagon train. This was an interesting case. John Murdock was an experienced leader and left Utah well-prepared with wagons and the

supplies necessary for the trip back. As he traveled east, he deposited caches of flour and other provisions which were used on his return trip. His trip from Salt Lake City to Florence took nine weeks and actually included musicians to provide entertainment on the way back. On the trip east they camped with westward wagon trains and enjoyed everyone's company and shared their music. He met his passengers in Florence, many of whom were Scandinavian immigrants. He wrote, "We remained at the river a short time and then loaded the luggage of the emigrants into our wagons. There were from sixteen to twenty persons, men, women, and children, assigned to each wagon. Those who were old enough to walk were expected to do so the greater part of the way. They would ride, occasionally, when the roads were good. I always appointed two men whose duty it was to look after the passengers. It was certainly novel to see a train starting out with everything that could be put into wagons and everything that could be tied to the outside, such as buckets, cans and all kinds of cooking utensils. It reminded one of an old turkey with a brood of young ones keeping her company. Generally there were about seven hundred passengers in one train." This company left Florence on the 4th of July, 1861. They arrived in Salt Lake in September and Thomas and his family immediately traveled north to Harrisville, not far from his sister Mary in Plain City, settling there for three years on a rented farm. A son, James, was born in Harrisville in 1863.

Mary recalled that her parents were not accustomed to farming at all and used to laugh about how little they knew about farming. Margaret traded her hand made quilts for sheep and calves.

By that time, Brigham Young was considering the organization of settlements in what is now Idaho. The West was still a frontier, and there were more dangers and risks in being far from the Salt Lake Valley. The Bear River Valley was one of three hundred and sixty settlements established under the direction of Brigham Young, a master colonizer who in just thirty years turned the barren deserts of the West into a refuge for upwards of eighty thousand Saints.

The Bear Lake Valley lies across what is now northern Utah and the southeastern portion of Idaho. It is nestled between two beautiful mountain ranges whose snows feed the valley streams and the nineteen mile long Bear Lake. Trappers discovered the valley in the earlier part of the 19th century and it became well known for its furs and pelts which were taken by pack trains to St. Louis. The valley, lake and river were named for the abundant bears whose population was significantly reduced by trappers before the Mormon colonization.

Another change in the valley was the massacre of large bands of renegade Shoshone Indians. These bands were under the control of Chiefs Leigh, Bear Hunter and Pocotello. Their presence threatened everyone in the area, even other native tribes. In the winter of 1862-63, they challenged Federal soldiers who in return attacked and killed many of the natives from the dangerous tribes – hundreds of men, women and children, although Chief Pocotello escaped.

In 1862, President Young was anxious to take advantage of a new homestead law passed by Congress. Settlers could apply to live on 160 acres and after five years would receive title to it. President Young wanted the Bear River valley secured by LDS pioneers in a successful attempt to preclude Gentile settlers from claiming this land. Brigham Young himself was not unfamiliar with the Idaho Territory, having traveled throughout it during 1856 in preparation for the Utah War.

In August of 1863, Brigham called his apostle Charles C. Rich to lead an exploring party to the Bear Lake Valley and select a settlement site. A few men from Cache Valley accompanied him with wagons in consideration of settling permanently. Fifty men also went on horseback in this first party and many cut logs and built homes. There were still Native Americans in the area, a band of the Shoshones who followed Chief Washakie. Unlike the renegade Shoshones, the Washakies weren't known for being fierce.

In October of 1863 most of the men returned to Utah for conference and then departed with their wives and more supplies in preparation for the winter. About one hundred and twenty men, women and children lived in the valley during that first winter. These early Mormon settlers found abundant fish and plenty of game in the meadows of the Bear River valley. To give an idea of the quality of these people, in the middle of the winter of 1864, two men went over the mountains to another settlement in Idaho to buy violin strings so the community could stage the play *William Tell*. They also organized a choir.

In May of 1864, President Brigham Young visited the settlement. He and his party, which included apostles George A. Smith, John Taylor, Heber C. Kimball and Wilford Woodruff, were fed fish fried in butter. President Young spoke to them on practical matters including safety, working together, trusting in the Lord, planting flower gardens and educating their children.⁴

Chief Washakie was actually a personal friend of Brigham Young, and about this time President Young and Apostle Rich used this friendship in smoothing out difficulties which had arisen in colonizing the area. The Mormon settlers worked to promote peace between themselves and the natives and also between various factions of the Washakies. President Young and Elder Rich visited Chief Washakie and Chief Pocotello at the shores of Bear Lake. They watched the waves come in and Elder Rich asked the chiefs to stop the waves. They replied that they couldn't. Elder Rich explained that the waves represented the settlers, and it would be easier to agree on peace instead of fighting with them. The two chiefs agreed on peace and the settlers and the natives enjoyed a feast, with the Mormons providing the beef which thrived in the meadows.

Eventually Washakies, who had refused to settle on reservations, lived peacefully in Southeastern Idaho, building homes, schools and adapting to farming. These bands were friendly to the Mormons and there were even cases of cattle being returned when a young buck stole from a nearby herd. Many, including Chief Washakie, joined the LDS Church.

In 1864 Thomas joined with seven hundred new settlers in the Bear River Valley who organized several communities, including Montpelier, Bloomington and St. Charles. The family initially lived in a dugout in Paris.⁵ Considering the large numbers of newcomers, they were probably

⁴In part, President Young said, "It is our duty to preserve our lives as long as possible. . . Keep your children in school, and let every father and mother make their homes so interesting that their children will never want to leave it. Make your houses and homes pleasant with foliage and beautiful gardens, with fragrance and variegated colors of flowers, and fruit blossoms, and above all, teach them always to remember that God must be in all our thoughts, and that from him proceeds every good thing."

⁵Paris was named after Fred Perris, an early settler. The name was intentionally misspelled.

lucky and grateful for that home. However, the winter of 1864-65 was much more severe than the previous winter and many cattle died. Some settlers wanted to leave, but Apostle Rich gave a stirring speech declaring that he had been called to settle the area and he would not leave. He died there twenty years later. One of his sons married Mary Jane Innes, the daughter whose writings have appeared in this chapter. Thomas and Margaret's sixth child, Charlotte, was born while they lived in the little dugout. Again, daughter Mary wrote, "The first winter was spent in a dugout with a fireplace and a hay floor, but as soon as canyon roads were open in the spring, Father soon built a house of sawed logs which was comfortable and warm. The grain and vegetables were frozen nearly every year, which made flour scarcely fit for pig feed; but Father made [the one hundred mile] trip to Ogden every fall with a load of oats and barley which he exchanged for good flour, then he would stay and work hauling sage brush which was used for fuel. He traveled by ox team, taking one week to go and another to return. Some of the family would accompany him, which was a special treat. He always bought one pair of shoes for each of us which was all we had for the year, going bare-footed in the summer. He bought our year's supply of molasses, dried fruit and groceries. We always had plenty of milk, butter, meat and eggs as well as fish and wild game." Because of the fresh water and large grazing areas, cattle raising proved to be very successful.

The second winter for the settlers was much better than the previous year. The harvest included an abundant supply of potatoes and wheat which was shared with the Washakies. Settlers often catered to the begging of the natives in order to keep peace. This was in line with directives from Brigham Young. A pioneer in Bear Lake wrote to the *Deseret News* during this time and said, "'Po-co-tell-o, the renowned Indian warrior, whose reputation for honesty is almost as great as that of a congressman, has paid a begging visit to the settlements without stealing anything from the settlers; the definition of the word, Po-co-tell-o in English literally means 'give us a sack of flour and two beeves.'"

The last of Thomas and Margaret's seven children, William, was born in a new frame home in 1868. Jane's grandfather Charles had moved with them through all of these trials. The following year Thomas and Margaret made the one hundred and fifty mile trip to Salt Lake City. There they were endowed and sealed together in the Endowment House. Father Charles accompanied them and received his own endowment. The Logan Temple, sixty miles away, was not dedicated until 1884, but Margaret kept track of her many family members and performed ordinances in their behalf after their deaths, including the ordinances for Thomas's sister Charlotte. In 1905, sixteen years after the death of her husband Thomas Innes, four of her living children accompanied her on a trip to the Logan Temple and were sealed to her and Thomas. Son Charles acted as proxy for Thomas and other relatives.

The aged widower Charles Innes helped build the first meeting house in Paris, a one room log cabin. He hewed the benches from solid logs. Muslin, in place of glass, was greased and used for windows. This kept out the cold but allowed light to filter in. Charles lived to be 92.

Fifteen years after settling in Paris, Apostle Rich called Margaret to serve as the Relief Society president in the First Ward where she served for seventeen years. Her responsibilities included caring for the sick and dressing and burying the dead. She also became a skilled pill maker.

Various family writings have described this process. “Making pills was an art in itself. The pills were made from flour, sugar, and drugs that were available. The dough was rolled into long, thin rolls, then cut into even, small pieces. The pieces were then rolled between the hands making a round pill. They were then put out to dry on wooden dough boards. As president of the Relief Society, Margaret had the responsibility of dispensing the permits for all liquors which were used as medicines. This was a great responsibility as the men would sometimes take advantage of this and claim their family members ill and needing this medication, use it themselves.” Another settler in Paris, Emeline Grover Rich, the daughter of Thomas Grover, was a plural wife of Apostle Rich. She worked with Margarette in caring for the sick and injured. Emeline became a skilled midwife and physician, even treating the settlers’ animals. She obtained the first dental equipment in the area, serving as the first dentist. The stamina and courage of these pioneer women was a vital resource in these early communities.

Mary recorded a comment made by her father’s sister Jane, who visited the family in Paris, probably traveling from Malad where she eventually settled. “His sister Jane Allison, while visiting us in Paris, said she had never known him to tell a falsehood. Their father, she said, was a very strict disciplinarian and believed that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. The temptation to evade the truth was sometimes strong, but she had never known Thomas to deny doing anything to get out of punishment. His loyalty and devotion to his friends and his deep affection for his family was recognized by all who knew him.”

Mary also wrote, “He was known for many years as the best educated man in Bear Lake Valley and the only one with a college degree. His advice was often sought and his decisions were always reliable. I have never asked him a question he could not answer. He was most generous to his family and friends, but very independent about receiving help. He was a man who did his own thinking and made his own decisions. I remember one time some of the leading citizens got up a petition to have the post master removed from office while he was away for a short time. ‘No,’ he said, ‘I won’t sign it. I consider you are taking a mean advantage of the man in his absence.’

“The last time I saw my father alive was when our son Ivan was two weeks old. He walked to our home and brought a nice chicken dressed by Mother. He died a few days later and after a few hours of illness, May 10th, 1889. Thomas was sventy-two. The funeral services held for him were wonderful; Apostle John W. Taylor and Moses Thatcher were among the speakers.” The only words we have that he wrote are from a verse he composed for Mary’s autograph album:

May your life be long and happy.
Truth and virtue still retain
That you may be counted worthy
The promised blessings to obtain;
With your husband be united
That your happiness may increase
And your children rise and bless you,
Fill your life with joy and peace.

Mary wrote that her mother, “was an excellent knitter, knitting for the whole family, including her grandchildren. She made all the stockings, gloves, mittens, scarves, and caps. She was noted for her good cooking especially her raisin bread. Her generosity was known all over the valley. She would share anything she had, often giving the last jar of jam to a sick friend.” Margaret died in Paris in 1909 at the age of eighty.

Six of the seven children of Thomas and Margaret Innes lived to adulthood and among them they had fifty-one children. As President Young directed, they all learned skills, such as farming, music, school teaching and carpentry. Young William died at the age of sixteen, apparently from a severe illness. Church records show he was ordained an elder just before his death.

Sources:

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Census, vital records and ship manifests from Ancestry.com

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1. This poem was read by Mary Innes Rich at a program given for the pioneers at the Howard Hotel in Brigham City on August 12th, 1929:

Eighteen hundred sixty-one in the month of June
When birds were nesting and roses in bloom,
McKeesport then was looking her best
Each bush and tree for summer was dressed;
Steamboats were passing from cities above
In the Innes home was peace and love.

Preparing to leave their cozy home nest,
And go by team to the unsettled West....
Father, Mother and children four
With an aged sire who had passed four score.
Helpless, we would pray, and the way so long,
But hearts were brave and faith was strong.

They went to Florence by boat and train,
A short time there they to remain,
To join John Murdock's ox team van
Two families to a wagon, I think was the plan.
The men all walked, and women folks, too,
Some of them walking the whole way through.

The children by spells helped lighten the load

As they toddled along the dusty road.
Camping at night by a running stream
To refresh the camp and graze the team.
When supper was over and children in bed,
They gathered for meeting I've heard it said.
Or danced on the ground to a lively tune
By the dim campfire or light of the moon.
They traveled along with many a break
In September they reached the Great Salt Lake.

The Innes' settled at Harrisville
Rented a farm the ground to till.
Farming you see was not in their line.
They had never milked cows or tended to swine.
I have heard them laugh at their amateur ways
Of running a farm in those early days.
The beautiful quilts that Mother had made
Were exchanged for sheep and calves in trade.

They moved to Paris in sixty-four;
Built a dugout with hay for a floor.
A smoky old chimney that wouldn't draw,
Though snow was deep and weather raw.
To this humble home a sweet babe came,
The fairest of all, Charlotte by name.

The following year we left the hay
And moved in a brand new house to stay.
It seemed like a mansion so dry and warm
With never a leak in the heaviest storm.
Their water cure books and home made pills
Proved a panacea for many ills.
They doctored their own and many others.
In those days all were as sisters and brothers.

Helping each other in every way;
Giving their time with no thought of pay.
They never gained riches, mere comfort at best,
But never regretted they came to the West.
They loved the Gospel, and felt fully repaid
For every Sacrifice they ever had made.

Our Pioneer parents were brave and true
And paved the way for me and you.
It's up to us and the younger generation
To follow their example to gain salvation.

Mary Innes Rich