

Bernard & Louise Knapp
Family History

Justin Abraham Knapp
Life Sketch

FROM THE FILES OF BERNARD ELDEN KNAPP

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JUSTIN ABRAHAM KNAPP

The name Knapp is of Teutonic origin, which might mean, "an esquire or body servant" to a knight or Noble--or a place name meaning "a hill" and is spelled in various ways.

The Knapps of America came to Massachusetts from Suffolk Co., England. Among whom was William Knapp, who came with Sir Richard Saltonstall in 1630, bringing his seven children with him,--his wife having died in England. Among the members of this family are; seaman, soldiers, writers, ministers, teachers, millmen and farmers.

The sixth generation from William was Silas Knapp, who married Lydia Mann, they moved from Massachusetts to New York and on to Nauvoo Illinois, with other members of the L. D. S. Church. Among their children there was one Albert, born at Antwerp, Jefferson Co., New York.

Albert was a member of the Mormon Battalion and made the long march from Leavenworth to California. His name is on the Mormon Battalion Plaque, at the State Capitol grounds in Salt Lake City, Utah. He returned to the Great Salt Lake Valley from California in 1849 and married Rozina Sheppard. Later he went back to the west, where he and John Hess Wreee the first to discover gold and silver leads in Eldorado Canyon. He sent for his family to come to him in California, his wife refused to leave the body of the church and stayed on in Utah with her children. Albert lived for a time in Los Vegas with his brother, later he was with his sister in Single California where he died late in 1864. Of this union there were six children, Justin being the second son and fifth child.

Justin Abraham Knapp was born in Farmington, Davis County, Utah, 4 August 1857, when he was five years old, he had Scarlet Fever, which tightened the cords in his left foot, and left him crippled for the remainder of his life. He often said that as a child he longed to run and play as other children did. When he was thirteen years old he worked in a grocery store. After the family left Farmington, they lived in Richmond, Utah.

Justin enjoyed hunting, and spent many hours tramping along the banks of the Bear River where there were many geese and ducks. He often told of a time when he brought down three geese with one shot. Later he continued to enjoy this pass-time, with his shot-gun on his arm he would hunt ducks on the sloughs and river on his farm, and wild chickens in the near-by sage country in Hibbard Idaho.

While working for a Mr. Brown in Park City, Utah, he learned the trade of stone cutting. After the days work was over he would stay at night and experiment on scraps of stone, which he polished and decorated with letters and designs. These he laid carefully away. One day Mr. Brown saw them; he was surprised and pleased with the work and encouraged Justin to put them on exhibition at the Fair in Logan, which he did and won some prizes.

As a stone mason he helped to build many important buildings in the communities in which he lived. One of these was the Logan Temple, for three years he worked on that beautiful edifice, a monument to the skill and craftsmanship of the pioneers. A building of which all church members are proud indeed, "a thing of beauty is a joy forever". His initials are cut in one of the stones. He prepared the corner stone which forms the box where the records and etc. are sealed. Another building which he helped to build of native stone, as the walls were raised, stone and mortar were drawn up by a horse.

There are many others he helped to build through out Cache and Snake River valleys. He also made a violin which he played at many parties and dances.

While working on the Temple he met Anna Eliza Lemmon, who was attending school in Logan. She was the daughter of Willis and Anna Eliza (Homer) Lemmon. Many hours of their courtship were spent gaily walking around the unfinished walls of the Temple. Who can guess the beauty of their dreams, the hope of their future. They were married in the Endowment House, 9 October 1878. Twelve children were born to them. (See family group sheet)

They suffered the loss of six children before death came to separate these two. At first they made their home in a brick house which he built in Richmond, Utah. There beside working at his trade, he played in the local brass band, and served a term as town marshal.

About 1888 he bought a relinquishment of 160 acres in Snake River Valley in what is now known as Hibbard, two and one-half miles west of Rexburg. He hired a man to take his furniture and stock. His wife and four children went on the train to Market Lake--now Roberts--where he met them with a team to continue their journey to their new home. There was no bridge across the Snake River there, so they crossed on

a ferry-boat operated by George Hibbard, Eliza's brother-in-law. They lived in a log house in Rexburg, owned by Mels Nelson, while their own house was being built down on the farm. He had indeed come to a hunters paradise for there were coyotes, badgers, porcupine, and for food; deer, antelope and hundreds of wild chickens and ducks and plenty of fish. The winters were hard and long. The land had to be cleared of sage-brush which was pulled out and burned, ditches and dikes were made. Some of the few neighbors were the James Park family, Berry s, Stathams and Parkers Beside working on his farm he worked at his trade, also at brick-laying and plastering, and shoe-making. Some few pioneers graves were marked by stones fashioned by his hands. He was a lover of horses and always had fine teams, and sold many good ones. Some time about 1899 he with his brother Morgan, built and ran a sawmill on Moody and Canyon creeks for about two years.

He also enjoyed wrestling and other feats of strength, because of the nature of his work he himself developed strong arm. one day he went to the old grist mill east of Rexburg. There were some boys from Ricks, lifting and trying to out-do each other. One boy held out a sack of flour on his wrist, Grandfather said to him. "Why don't you put it on your hand?" The boy retorted, "You cant do it?" Grandfather said, "What do you have to say I can't?" So the fellows gathered about \$4.50 for a bet. Grandfather held out his hand, they put a fifty-pound sack of flour on it, then he held out the other hand and said "Put another one on this hand", which they did and he raised them both upward. The boys offered him the money, he laughed and said he did not want their money.

The first school held in Island ward (Hibbard later) was in the Knapp granary. It was built of logs, covered with factory and white-washed, when furnished with seats and desks it was very comfortable.

In his church he served as first Superintendent of Religion Class. organized in Hibbard by Karl G. Maeser. He also served as councilor to Bishop Joseph E. Rigby, and in January of 1914, he went to Southern California and there filled a short time mission. After his return in late spring his health failed rather fast. For years he had suffered with Hay Fever and Asthma. In November 1918, he was stricken with a stroke and died 21 November 1918. At that time the influenza was raging and no public gatherings were allowed, he was buried after a short graveside service in the Rexburg Cemetary, where the bodies of six of his children had been laid to rest.

Written by his daughter-in-law.

Mabel H. Knapp.

Copied by Claudia Hess, his granddaughter.