

Ephraim Mecham

EPHRAIM MECHAM was born 8 March 1808 in Canaan, Grafton County, New Hampshire. He was the son of Joshua Mecham (1773-1846) and Permelia Chapman (1777-1866), both of whom were born in Connecticut. Joshua's parents were Samuel Meacham Jr. (1739-1811) and Phebe Main (1747-1845). They had moved from Connecticut to New Hampshire before the Revolutionary War.

Quoting from Polly Derby Mecham:

"Ephraim's grandfather Chapman's name was Samuel Chapman (1741-1817), and his grandmother's name was Hannah Fox (1755-1844). She was the mother of three children; their names were Permelia, Amos, and Hannah. They lived in Connecticut. Samuel Chapman served in the war of 1812. Also his son Amos. Just preceding the battle Amos wrote to his folks at home saying that if he lived through it he would write again. They never heard from him again, so the conclusion is that he layed down his life for his country."

Ephraim Mecham's ancestors, the Meacham, Main, Chapman and Fox families, all lived in Connecticut and before that, in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Ephraim's grandfather on his mother's side, Samuel Chapman (1741-1817) was the son of Solomon Chapman (1706-1795) and his wife Susannah, of Connecticut. Solomon was the son of William Chapman (1665/1670-1734) and Lydia Lincoln (1682-1734), also of Connecticut. Lydia was the daughter of Samuel Lincoln (1658-1704) and Sarah Royce (1665-1688). Samuel Lincoln's parents were Thomas Lincoln (1638-1708) and Mary Austin (1632-1694). Sarah Royce was a great-granddaughter of Francis Eaton, a Mayflower pilgrim, through his daughter Ann Eaton (1605-1688) who married Hugh Calkins (1600-1690).

The Main or Mayne family came from Devonshire, England and settled in Maine, Massachusetts and Connecticut. Phebe Main's other ancestors were families Brown, Price, Pendleton, Newhall, and Barry. Hannah Fox's ancestors were families Fox, Minor, Tuttle (Tuthill), Way, Burroughs, Brooks, Sumner, Lane, Bradford, West, Denslow, and Franklin. One interesting ancestor was Giovanni de Angelo, an Italian who was born about 1514 in Italy and settled in England after coming there as a sailor, and changed his name to George (or John) Denslow.

Ephraim Mecham was married to Polly Derby in Mercer County, Pennsylvania 29 Nov. 1828.

(Quoting again from Polly):

"As a boy he was very exemplary; he did not use bad language or tobacco or strong drink, he kept good company and before he was fifteen years of age he joined the Reformed Methodists. Being religiously inclined, he was prepared for the true gospel when he heard it preached where he lived. He knew it was the Shepherd's voice and gladly came into the fold. Always firm in the principles of the gospel, he has left a name that is worth more than gold or silver. He had no fear of death. He said he knew just what his condition would be when he got beyond the veil. He was a kind husband, a loving father, and a good honest Latter-day Saint. "Father and Mother Mecham (Joshua and Permelia) joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the summer of 1837 (another source says it was in the spring of 1836). In 1838 Joshua and Permelia, together with their sons Ephraim, Edward, Lewis and their families went to gather with the Saints at Missouri but were stopped by a mob at Quincy who would not let them cross the Mississippi River. They suffered many persecutions with the rest of the saints and were driven from place to place. One night they had to sleep in the woods with their little children and watch their home be burned to the ground by an angry mob. They also lived in Nauvoo."

After being prevented by the mob from entering Missouri, Ephraim and Polly Derby Mecham and their 3 children went to Iowa, where Ephraim's brother Moses had settled earlier. Eventually they settled near Montrose (across the river from Nauvoo), where they lived for 14 years. Six more children were born into the family while they lived in Iowa. Then, in 1853, Ephraim and Polly and their 6 surviving children crossed the plains to Utah and settled in Lehi. They had 12 children altogether, but four of these had died young and then two more were born after they settled in Utah. The children were:

1.AMOS MECHAM (b. 1830 in Mercer, Erie Co., Penn., d. Apr. 1831); 2.PERMELIA MECHAM (b. 11 Sep 1832 in Mercer, Penn., md. DANIEL BIGELOW, d. 10 June 1911 in Wallsburg); 3.LEWIS MECHAM (b. 18 Dec. 1835 in Mercer, Penn., md. VASTIA or VASHTI EMILY JOHNSON, and later ESTHER HERBERT, d. 14 Oct 1907 in Wallsburg); 4.ELVIRA MECHAM (b. 1836 in Mercer, Penn. and d. Oct 1845); 5.EMMA MARIA MECHAM (b. 9 May 1840 in Montrose, Lee Co., Iowa, md. WILLIAM BROWN HILL, d. 6 Aug. 1923); 6.HYRUM MORONI MECHAM (b. 20 Aug 1842 in Montrose, Iowa, md. SARAH ANN STEVENS and later LOUISA JANE KIRBY, d. 14 Feb 1917); 7.SARAH ANN MECHAM (b. 1844 in Montrose, Iowa, and d. Jan 1847); 8.EPHRAIM DON CARLOS MECHAM (b. 1846 in Montrose, Iowa, d. Oct 1846); 9.MARY HENRIETTA MECHAM (b. 10 Apr 1848 in Montrose, Iowa, md. MILES BATTY, d. 21 Dec 1899 in Wallsburg); 10.POLLY CELESTIA MECHAM (b. 2 Apr 1852 in Montrose, Iowa, md. WILLIAM HAWS, d. 21 Apr 1890); 11.JOHN ALBERT MECHAM (b. 21 June 1854 in Lehi, Utah, md. ROSELLA ANN BIGELOW, d. 14 Jan 1934 in Provo); **12.ADELIA VILATE MECHAM (b. 26 Dec 1856 in Lehi, Utah, md. ROBERT WILSON GLENN, Jr., d. 25 Nov 1941 at the age of 84).

Ephraim Mecham and his wife Polly and many of their children moved in 1862 to Weber County. They later came back to Provo and then moved to Wallsburg, Wasatch County, Utah, near the top of Provo Canyon. One winter they got snowed in, in Wallsburg, in snow so deep no one could get out. Their

provisions were scanty and their flour supply gave out. They lived mostly on meat. The following spring Ephraim had to pay \$20 for a 100 pound sack of flour.

He suffered many hardships during his long and useful life but it was a happy life. He and Polly lived to celebrate their 62nd wedding anniversary.

Ephraim Mecham died in Wallsburg 6 July 1891 at age 83; and Polly Derby Mecham died 1 Dec. 1898 at age 85. They are both buried in the cemetery in Wallsburg, Wasatch County, Utah.

The reason the Mechams delayed coming to the Rocky Mountains until the 1850's seems to have been because of a combination of things: elderly parents who were unable to travel, sickness, lack of supplies because of their poverty, and childbearing. It seems that all of the Mechams were rather independent in spirit, and since they lived in their own settlement over in Iowa, they were not in such a hurry to go west as the Saints who were driven out of Nauvoo.

(Lewis Mecham, 1835-1907, son of Ephraim Mecham and Polly Derby, didn't come west until 1862. He first settled in Rush Valley, and later moved to Wallsburg).

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