

# **Dr. Joseph Young**

*Written by Mary E. Warner*

Dr. Joseph Young, grandfather of Brigham Young, father of six, was a veteran of the French and Indian Wars of the early colonial period. England and France were fighting on many fronts, but this war was of peculiar significance for its issue was whether the New World of North America would be controlled by the French or by the British. The final battle on the Plains of Abraham, near Quebec, in which Wolfe, while victor, lost his life, settled that issue for all time. Britain won and France withdrew.

Dr. Young being a surgeon had, as his main occupation, the amputation of arms and legs damaged in the fighting in the campaign to control the Canadian gateway near Lake George and Lake Champlain. He varied this work with the extraction of arrows from various parts of the soldiers' anatomy and probing for bullets fired at close range from the matchlock muskets of the French. These lead balls were more than one half an inch in diameter and made a hole large enough to make probing for a bullet a major operation- It seems impossible for men to have survived such a shock as these wounds must have inflicted, yet many of them lived. In those days it was a question of which was worse, the wound or the treatment, but men were tough fibered, and immune to many of the infecting bacteria of the day. Oftentimes the poultices and the ointment applied to these wounds were as effective as those treatments in use today.

After the war Dr. Young settled in the farming community of Hopkinton, Massachusetts. This town, a little east and south of Worcester, was new, with a good deal of new land, and a new opportunity, and here the doctor combined his practice of medicine with farming.

One fine day he received a call to come to the house of John Hayden, far gone with cancer. Dr. Young had a reputation in the neighborhood for successful treatment of cancer, but this particular case had resisted his best efforts. Nursing Mr. Hayden was his widowed daughter Betsy Hayden Treadway. She was fair and comely, so the visits had not only the effect of giving comfort to Mr. Hayden but also of giving interest in things other than medical treatment to Dr. Young. He fell in love with her, and in due course of time they were married. In the course of the next nine years six children were born to the couple.

In 1769 Dr. Joseph Young died. Many years later, Brigham Young stated that he was killed by the falling of a fence rail, but Phineas, Brigham's brother, reported that the death was due to being struck by a falling tree. Both could have been right. It could be that a tree felled for the purpose of making fence rails could have been called a fence rail. It would have been an odd accident, indeed, for a fence rail, once split and placed in a fence, to have fallen in such a manner as to fatally injure a man. Fences in that day were usually called "worm" fences, because of the

irregular way they "wormed" their way over the landscape. Even the top rail was not in a position to do more than injure an arm or a leg. A falling tree seems more reasonable as a cause of death.

After the death of her husband, Elizabeth Hayden Young was hard put to earn a living, and during the next four years lost her possessions. She was forced to send her children out to work. John and Joseph (John was six years of age at the death of his father) were "bound out" to a man by the name of Jones who had both white and black servants.