

JOHN BIRD AND MARY JANE WHITEHEAD BIRD

by Anona Bird Grandy



John Bird

John Bird was born at Birmingham, England, August 7, 1841, to John and Anne Russell Bird. He had two brothers, Walter and William, and two sisters, Rebecca and Annie. Birmingham was then a large manufacturing city. John's parents were converted to Mormonism and baptized by Apostle Wilford Woodruff.

Walter and a neighbor boy, Thomas Tew, left for America in 1850, and when John was fourteen years of age the rest of the family sailed

for America, borrowing money from the Perpetual Emigration Fund. They were on the water seven weeks and two days. They had left on the ship *Elious*, but it was bumped into by another ship and they were forced to return and charter the *Charles Buck*. The family of John Grimmett was among the passengers. A son of theirs was standing by the ropes watching a storm when a sudden force of wind threw him overboard. Richard Ballantyne, president of the company, encouraged them kindly.

Rebecca's sweetheart, Thomas Tew, and Annie's sweetheart, George Sumption, paid the girls' fare out west. These two couples were later married.

The Bird family went to New Orleans, then sailed up the Mississippi River and Missouri River to a little landing place called Atchinson, where the father died of cholera. He had worked in the lead works at Birmingham, and possibly the strain of the trip and the poison from the lead worked on him, causing his death.

They crossed the plains with ox teams, their diet consisting of herbs, milk and bread, and what little meat they could get.

Arriving in Utah in September 1855, they went right through Salt Lake City to Springville. Bishop Johnson got them a place to live. Walter was already living there with a Richard Bird, who was no relation to their knowledge.

Springville grew very fast in the ten years they lived there. John was unable to attend school, so all the schooling he had was in a Sunday School of the Mormon Church while in England. He had to work, and did mostly odd jobs in Farmington, Utah. He wanted to leave Springville so that he could take up land, and in the spring of 1864 he came to Bear Lake. He wintered with Bill Bird, who also was no relation so far as they knew. Bill had come to Bear Lake in 1863. The following spring John began to stake his claims and take up land. He

built a log cabin with a dirt roof and no floor, secured what little necessities he needed, and built most of his plain furniture. He then sent for his mother, sister Becky, and brother Will. Tom Tew came with them. Annie had married and did not come with them.

William moved to Dingle, staked claims for a homestead, and married Mary Ann Sparks.

In 1868 John went back on the plains as a night herder — they herded cattle at night so the Indians could not steal them. However, they made friends with the Indians and had little trouble with them. This same season was one of very high water, and six young men drowned in Green River. Bishop Ed. Stock of Fish Haven was almost drowned when Heber Oakey threw a rope to him and he was pulled to shore.

After about three months they migrated back to Salt Lake City. There John found that the last immigrant company was to arrive at Platte, Missouri, the nearest the railroad came at that time. He met the train and assisted this last immigrant company in coming to Utah. Mary Jane Whitehead was in this company and they fell in love. In the spring of 1869 they were married at the Endowment House by George A. Smith. They later moved to Paris, Idaho.

Mary Jane Whitehead was born June 8, 1844, at Bristol, England. She came to America while in her teens with her mother, sister and brothers, crossing the plains in the last company which arrived in Salt Lake Valley.

Mary Jane was a small, plump, round-faced, pretty girl, dark complexioned, with brown eyes and pleasant features. She was ordinarily of a quiet disposition, but had a strong will, meaning whatever she said. She was intelligent, and held her temper, but would not allow anyone to take advantage of her. She had many friends, people instinctively liking her. She was said to have a "way" with the Indians, and they would do almost anything for her. She was a steady worker, an exceptionally good cook, but was not interested in sewing. She loved clean white clothes and "dolloed" her clothes many hours longer than other ladies of her neighborhood.

Mary Jane's people settled along the Snake River Valley. However, her sister Eliza married Fred Wood of Ovid and settled at Liberty, where Fred ran a shoemaker shop. Her brothers Frank and John, both musicians, located at Franklin. Emma, her youngest sister, married Fred Passey, who operated a store in Paris where the Ted Davis home later stood.

John and Mary Jane lived at Paris in his log cabin. At first they lived by trading with the Indians. They burned sagebrush for fuel and rode Indian ponies for extra supplies. She

suffered many hardships and privations, giving birth to her children unaccompanied by a doctor.

John and Mary Jane had five children, Anne, Janie, John, Emma and Minnie. Janie died of diphtheria at the age of eleven. Anne married William Nate and moved to Canada, where she died in 1901. John married Ettie Rebecca Nate and stayed in Paris. Emma married Francis Orchard and moved to Tooele, Utah. Minnie married Walter Kelbaugh and moved to Salt Lake City.

Mary Jane died in childbirth, her unborn child dying also, in the spring of 1879.

That same year John met Anna Maria Musser at the home of George Spencer. They were later married and were the parents of four children, Walter, George, Edith and Mona. Walter married Sarah Ludlum and stayed in Paris. Mona married Henry Ellis and moved to Moreland, Idaho. Edith married Perry Nowland and moved to Dingle.

John Bird died on January 6, 1932, a little less than a year after he told his memoirs to Mary Anona Bird.

WILLIAM HENRY BIRD

by Mrs. Russell Dayton

William Henry Bird was the son of John Bird and Ann Russell. He was born in Birmingham, England July 22, 1847. His parents were converted to the Mormon Church after hearing its principles preached on the streets of their native city by Mormon Elders.

The family left England when William was eight years old. They came to America in 1855 with the Richard Ballantyne Company. One of his close friends who was among the voyagers was John Grimmer, father of the late John Grimmer. On the voyage over his son, George, was on the upper deck watching a storm. He was thrown overboard and was lost at sea.

After seven weeks on the water the party arrived in New Orleans and from there sailed up the Mississippi River to Atchinson. From here they started their trek to Utah. While on this journey the father, John Bird, died and was buried on the plains in an old slab box.

The rest of the company arrived in Utah in September, 1855. They traveled through Salt Lake City and into Springville where they remained for the next ten years.

While in Springville, William Bird was called back four times to help bring other immigrants to Utah. Two of these

times he went back to England and the other two, he went to the east coast.

Two brothers and two sisters came across at the same time he did and most of them remained in Springville. One sister, Rebecca Bird, married Thomas Tew. To this couple were born 13 children.

William, his mother and his brother, John, came to Bear Lake County in 1865 and settled in Paris, Idaho. While living in Paris, he married Mary Ann Sparks in the Logan Temple. A short time after they were married, they moved to Dingle, Idaho. While here William staked his claim for a homestead and was employed in the farming industry. He worked very hard on his farm and was janitor of the Dingle school until he was eighty years old.

William was a very active man. He carried the mail for a number of years. He was the father of fourteen children, five of these children preceeded him in death.

He passed away December 1, 1932 at his home in Dingle. His wife, Mary Ann, passed away February 1, 1936. They are both buried in the Dingle cemetery.

MARY ISABELLE SIRRINE BLOOMER

by Mary S. Ream

Mary Isabelle was born in American Fork, Utah March 15, 1859. She was the daughter of George and Esther Sirrine. She moved with her parents to Bear Lake Valley in 1863 at the age of four. She remained in Paris for seventeen years until 1880. Her father was a natural doctor and was called on to set broken bones and offer medical assistance. She married Edward Dexter Bloomer February 16, 1877 in Montpelier. She and her husband followed her parents to Arizona in 1880.

This trip was not easy for these hardy young pioneers. They followed her parents' trail and went by covered wagon. The trip took them two months, but they were glad to see the Sirrine family. They located and built a fine home. They had eleven children born to them, seven daughters and four sons. Isabelle lived for her family. Her interests were always her children and in doing things for them. Her life was lived for those around her.