

Benjamin Thomas Clark



Benjamin Thomas Clark was born February 20, 1799, in Cambridge, England, the youngest child and only son of Thomas Benjamin Clark and Elizabeth Bell. His father, Thomas

Benjamin Clark, was born in Coventry, Warwick County, England, in 1768. Elizabeth Bell, his mother, was born in Cambridge, Cambridge County, England, on December 13, 1763. She was the daughter of Joseph Bell and Ann Eusden. Benjamin Thomas's father and mother were married in the St. Giles Parish in Cambridge on April 25, 1793. We have record of three other children being born to Thomas and Elizabeth in Cambridge; Elizabeth, on May 19, 1794; Martha Ann, December 27, 1795; and Frances in 1797.

On September 24, 1819, Benjamin Thomas married Ann Leaford Shuker, in St. Giles Parish, Cambridge. She was the daughter of Joseph and Elisabeth Harvey Shuker, and the granddaughter of Ann Leaford and Joseph Shuker, and was born June 19, 1800, in Cambridge.

Benjamin Thomas and Ann made their home in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England, and were the parents of twelve children. Ann Leaford Shuker Clark died and was buried in Chesterton, England, June 24, 1848. On May 25, 1850, Benjamin Thomas married a widow, Ann Southwell Seymore. They were parents of three children: Lorenzo S., Heber Abraham, and Ellen Marinda. Lorenzo S. was born in 1852 in Chesterton, Cambridgeshire, England, and died December 19, 1923. He was married to Mary Rachel Wagstaff. Heber Abraham was born

February 23, 1855, in Salt Lake City, Utah, and died May 30, 1863. Ellen Marinda was born May 2, 1857, in Salt Lake City, and died February 28, 1912. She married Robert Seddoway.

Benjamin Thomas was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints December 26, 1849. In 1850 three of his children, William Bell, Benjamin Thomas Jr. and Ann Shuker were baptized. Susannah Shuker was baptized in 1851, Thomas Benjamin in 1852.

Benjamin wanted to immigrate to America, and the family worked toward this end. He was a man of considerable property, owning a brick yard, a hostelry, and several houses in Cambridge which he built and rented. When he decided to immigrate he sold all his holdings. Two of his children preceded him to America. His daughter Frances and her husband, James Stratton, arrived in Utah in 1851. William Bell left England in his 17th year and arrived in Salt Lake City in the spring of 1852. Benjamin and Ann Southwell, with their baby, Lorenzo, and with all of his living children except Joseph John, Charles Jonas, and Martha, left Liverpool, England, January 23, 1853, on the ship Golconda. They arrived in Utah Oct. 6, 1853, crossing the plains with the Sayrus Wheelock Company.

William Bell had been in America for over a year when his father and family arrived. In anticipation of their coming, he had bought a piece of land and had started to make adobes and to accumulate logs for their home. But their first winter was spent in a dugout in the banks of the gulch made by a creek now known as "Parley's Stream," which was in the vicinity of the present Sugar House District. The next year Benjamin purchased ten acres of farm land in the Big Field Survey, and with the help of his son, William Bell, and his brothers, built a large adobe house. It had a big family room heated by a fireplace, and a storage room and a loft above

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for extra sleeping space, which was reached by a ladder. Benjamin had been trained to work with wood and was a construction worker. He brought with him to America a chest of the finest carpenter tools available. With these tools he was able to make comfortable furniture for his home and to help many other people build and furnish their homes.

The entire family lived together in this home, including the married children who stayed there until they were able to get homes of their own. The family loved music and often invited their friends to their home. They were especially kind to the immigrating families from England. In the winter of 1856 when the Edward Martin Handcart Company arrived in Salt Lake, Benjamin and his family took Ruth Briggs and her five children into their home. The children were frostbitten and ill from the lack of food. Ruth was badly frozen and was in bed most of the winter. She had buried her husband, John Briggs, and one of her sons along the trail. John had given most of his rations to his children, thinking he could get along until relief came. But he became so weak he could not endure the hardships of the journey through the snow and blizzards. The Clarks loved Ruth and her family, and she stayed on with them, and on June 28,

1857, she and Benjamin were married in the plural marriage covenant. They had one child, Alice. Ruth never really recovered from the hardships of the Handcart Company, and she died in 1859. In 1860 her daughter, Alice, also passed away.

Benjamin was also married to Martha Larkins in plural marriage, on April 28, 1866. She too, was a semi-invalid. She had no children, and she survived him. His children always called her "Aunt Patty."

Benjamin Thomas Clark, like most of his fellow pioneers, suffered many hardships, but in spite of his trials, he never lost faith in God, and was always ready to help his fellow men and to serve the Lord. He paid an honest tithing and showed outstanding loyalty to the leaders of the Church. He especially loved President Brigham Young. Benjamin was known as a man of his word; he was humble, sincere, and of deep religious convictions and was respected by all who knew him. He left his family a heritage to be proud of. He passed away November 4, 1867, age 68, just 14 years after he came to Utah. The following children were born to Benjamin Thomas and Ann Shuker Clark:

	Name	Date	Place	Died
1.	Thomas Benjamin	20 Sep 1820	Cambridge, England	11 Oct 1910
2.	Joseph John	4 Apr 1822	"	6 Dec 1892 Eng.
3.	Elizabeth	15 Jun 1824	"	5 Oct 1919
4.	Ann Shuker	15 Aug 1826	"	10 Jun 1913
5.	Frances	3 Apr 1828	"	3 Aug 1894
6.	Charles Jonas	20 Sep 1830	"	24 Sep 1894
7.	Martha	18 Jan 1832	"	18 Feb 1924 Eng.
8.	William Bell	6 Aug 1834	"	22 Mar 1921
9.	Benjamin Thomas Jr.	2 Feb 1836	"	28 May 1893
10.	Susannah	15 Jun 1838	"	1 Jan 1841 Eng.
11.	Susannah Shuker	16 Dec 1841	"	29 Nov 1931
12.	Caroline Shuker	28 Apr 1845	Chesterton, England	25 Mar 1909