

# Life Sketch Of Henry Freeman Cook and Sophronia Strobridge

By Gertrude C. Jackson (Great Grand Daughter), Written (? Date)

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Henry Freeman Cook was born 12 January 1815 at Homer, Courtland County, New York. He was the fifth child and fourth son of William Cook, born 6 September 1780, at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (county), Massachusetts, and Lucy Chapman Cook. Lucy was born 5 May 1787 at Hancock, Berkshire, Massachusetts.

Henry's father and mother must have lived in Massachusetts until after the birth of their first two children. The census records list them as being born in Massachusetts. His mother was the daughter of Amassa and Ann Derby Chapman. No trace of his father's parents has been found to date. Great Grand-Father had temple work done for two uncles, Abiel and Job Cook, which is the only clue we have to the number in his grandfather's family. Eight children were born to his parents.

We know very little about his childhood, but family history tells that the Cooks were farmers and stock raisers. He no doubt helped on his father's farm. Sometime between 1835 and 1838 the Cook family along with Henry, his new bride, and other families of the area left New York State and went to Kalamazoo County, Michigan. Henry's uncle, Abiel Cook, was already a resident of Michigan, and had no doubt convinced the other families that they could better their lot by moving there. Abiel Cook died in Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1836.

Henry married Sophronia Strobridge (born 14 March 1813 at Solon, Courtland County, New York) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1837 in New York State. Sophronia was the daughter of George Augustus (Born 3 September 1785 at Clairmont, \_\_\_\_\_(county), New Hampshire) and Abigail Lull Strobridge.

They must have left soon after their marriage for Michigan. Their first child, John, was born in Comestock, Kalamazoo, Michigan on 22 May 1838. They had to work very hard in this new location to make their home. The history books of Michigan say that the mosquitoes and other insects were terrible and the soil seemed to be rampant with infectious diseases. Henry's father, William Cook, died there on 4 November 1840. On a visit to Comstock a few years ago, another of Henry's Great Grand-daughters found that William Cook was the first person buried in the Comstock Cemetery.

Three more children were born to them in Comstock; James on 14 January 1840, Hannah on 22 January 1842, and Mary Jane on 2 January 1844. The missionaries no doubt found them and taught them the gospel during this period, as the baptismal records show that Sophronia was baptized in March 1843 and Henry on 15 May 1843.

Sometime after the birth of their fourth child, Mary Jane, in January 1844, they moved to Nauvoo, Illinois. Their fifth child, Charles, was born there on 21 February 1846. They suffered the same persecutions as the other Saints. They had to leave this beautiful city almost before they were settled. Along with others of the Saints they went to Council Bluffs, Iowa for a while. Their sixth child, William (born 19 October 1847), and their seventh, George (born 20 March 1850), made their appearance here.

Shortly after the birth of George they moved to St. Louis, Missouri where they prepared to make the trip to Salt Lake city, Utah. They traveled with the Warren Snow Company, arriving in Utah in October, 1852. For a year or two they made their home in Big Cottonwood, Salt Lake County. Their eighth child, Harriet Ann, was born there 20 May 1853. Their last two children, twin girls, Janett and Marett, were born in Cedar Fort, Utah County, Utah on 17 March 1856. Just when they made the move to Cedar Valley we have no record. Their little Harriet died young and was buried in one of the first graves in the old cemetery.

Henry's mother, Lucy Chapman Cook, came with them to Utah, and made her home with them until her death 16 October 1857. She had left her home and her other children to come to the West with her son for the Gospel's sake. Her patriarchal Blessing states that she was the daughter of Amassa and Ann Darby Chapman.

Henry and Sophronia Cook seemed to have had a little more property than most of the families coming west. They had horses and cattle which were brought with them across the Plains. They may have also had sheep as there were sheep in the valley in the early days. Their daughter Hannah used to tell of a light gray or white team she remembered well.

Sometime after their arrival in the valley a group of immigrants came through on their way to California. They had a mare with them, heavy with foal, which had given out, which they traded to the Cooks for a fresh horse. This mare was of fine blood and her colt proved to be a great horse. He was named Jeff and was sought out by the settlers for miles around to improve their stock.

A sporting man from the East saw the quality in this strain and paid a big price for one of Jeff's colts which he took back East. He found him being used to run a threshing machine. The Cook brand was and still is JH-C with the J and H combined. This animal was branded with the Cook brand, which was mistaken for JIC, which was the name given to him by his new owner.

He was a tough-mouthed animal who required a special bit to hold him under control. A bit was designed and called the JIC bit, which is still on the market. JIC was trained for cart racing, and was near the top in his racing record, being next to Maud S at one time. She held the world's record in cart racing.

Jane Hacking Fisher was the midwife who took care of Sophronia when the twins, Janett and Marett, were born. Sometimes she would take her small son, Moroni, with her when she went to care for Mother and babies. He told Alice Cook that he remembered those visits with a warm feeling as he always got a big slice of bread and butter, which he didn't very often get at home.

On 11 June 1878 Henry Freeman Cook was ordained Bishop of the Cedar Fort Ward, where he served until his death, 14 April 1882. He was a kind, generous, quiet, industrious man, not given much to frivolity. A story is told of him by Annie Glines Hacking in her biographical sketch in which she tells of attending a dance in Cedar Fort. The band began playing a waltz, which the Bishop, along with other Church authorities, frowned upon. Youth-like, the young ladies of the Ward decided the Bishop and his counselors were going to dance, and so they converged on Bishop Cook and his counselors and pulled them out on the floor. Other young ladies kept them dancing for a considerable length of time. One of his sons, George (Dod for short) came into the dance hall and saw his father waltzing. He exclaimed loudly, "Father, you are actually waltzing, I don't believe my eyes!" The Bishop was quite embarrassed, but we wonder if he didn't enjoy it a little.

Henry took part in all community projects—he owned shares in the co-op owned by the people of the valley. His son, John, helped manage the store. He married in polygamy, a young widow, Julia Ann Rocker Laughlin, with five small children. She was the widow of David Sanders Laughlin. They were the parents of four children, which made fourteen children of his own and five step-children, which made nineteen to raise and educate. He passed away on 14 April 1882, and is buried in Cedar Fort. A pioneer of merit.

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