HORACE WILLIAM HANCEY

Written by Cleta Hancey Hansen, daughter, and Marilyn Hansen Sonderegger, Granddaughter

Horace William Hancey was the 3rd child of 11 born to James Hancey and his first wife Rachel Seamons. Rachel had joined the church in 1852 in England, when when she was 18 years old. James was also baptized in England, at the age of 20, 2 months after their marriage in 1855. It was during the reign of Queen Victoria, when thousands of English and Scandinavian people were being baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and emigrating to the United States. Many found it difficult to obtain passage on ships, and came in just about anything that could sail the great and treacherous Atlantic Ocean. Some even took passage on cattle transport ships which were ill-equipped for human beings, but so great was their desire to join the Saints in Utah, they came anyway they could. Rachel and James were, no doubt, moved by the Spirit, as others were, together with and help strengthen the Saints.

In the spring of 1856, the Mission Pres. At Liverpool, England, sent word to the Saints that a ship had been chartered. On Feb. 17, 1856, James & Rachel joined the other 450 Saints on the good ship Caravan and set sail for America. On 24 March, Rachel gave birth to her first son while on the Ocean. He was named James Sands after his father and the Captain of the ship, William Sands. 3 days later the ship landed in New York Harbor.

The family lived in New Jersey about 3 years where James worked. Their second child, George Henry, was born 21 June 1858.

In the year 1859, John Taylor, who was president of the New York Conference, counseled the Saints to move their families as far west as their means would take them. Accordingly, all Saints moved their families as far west as Omaha, Nebraska. While in Omaha, they all became very ill, and little George Henry lost his life 25 Sep. 1859, when he was only 15 months old. James and Rachel, however, were dauntless, laid their son to rest, and prepared for the birth of their 3rd child, Horace William was born in Omaha 25 Feb. 1860.

In 1860, there was no railroad from Omaha to Utah, and work on it did not begin until 1865 after Congress gave the Union Pacific Railroad the responsibility to begin construction from Omaha westward. However, this did not deter the pioneers, and on the 25 May 1860, James and Rachel, with their two children, continued their journey by covered wagon with the Edmond Norton Co. Through wind and rain and boring rays ray of sun they traveled, enduring hunger, thirst, parched lips and tears. Their hearts were heavy as they left their beloved little boy buried in Omaha. Side by side they continued on and arrived in Salt Lake City 4 Sep. 1860. Rachel had carried her infant son Horace in her arms all the way.

After arriving in Salt Lake City and visiting for 2 days with friends they had known in England, they left for Cache Valley in a wagon and mule team with a Mr. Molen. They joined a few families who were camped on a small spring about 5 miles north of Logan. The settlement had been organized on 1 July 1860, and named Hyde Park. Here James and Rachel made their home for the rest of their days.

Thus it was that Horace arrived in Hyde Park with his family on 9 Sep. 1860, at the age of 61/2 months. It was in the same year that Pony Express began carrying mail from Missouri, across Utah to California. Horace grew up in this early settlement. He was educated and trained in righteous living, and in the hard work of Pioneer life. He attended the Hyde Park school in the “Old Rock Meeting House” (as it was called.) It was a 30 by 50 foot structure erected in 1866.
The carpentry work was done by Horace’s father, James Hancey.

In 1882, when Horace was 22 years old, he went to Provo, Utah, and entered the Brigham Young University. The Church was interested in educating its youth, and developed an educational system independent of the State, who provided no secondary or higher education at that time.

Horace kept a journal during this period, entitling his first entries “Theology and Moral Instruction”. It contains his lesson work and assignments from his instructor Dr. Karl G. Maeser, who was sent by Brigham Young to establish the University in Provo, in 1875. It is certain that Karl G. Maeser had a deep influence on Horace in developing his philosophy of life and his testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

His journal entries discuss such subjects as “Gifts of the Spirit.” “The Priesthood,” and many other Gospel principles. It also contains the Lord’s blessings on the Sacrament, and his family Genealogy. It is not difficult to discern what was important to him. Horace told his family that when Brother Maeser was called to go out and administer to the sick, he would often call Horace to go with him.

Horace’s journal also contains some of his original poetry and grammar lessons, and shows him to be a beautiful penman, with an excellent command of English grammar. It shows a great sensitivity in understanding Gospel principles as he answers questions with depth and seriousness. Some of his poetry in the journal indicates he had a typical frontier childhood playing in the vales and fields, one room schooling, and childish pranks. His writings also indicate serious spiritual thoughts concerning preparation for life after death, and comfort for those who mourned the loss of loved ones. He wrote of love, of disappointment, and of faith in The Creator, and after his marriage, he wrote of love for his wife and family. He had a great respect for womanhood. From his writings, he appears to be an exceptionally spiritual man who very deeply loved the Lord. Many who knew him have said that he did.

For a time, Horace was employed by and lived in the home of John W. Taylor, an Apostle of the Church, who lived in Riverton, Utah. It was probably in the summer of 1889 when the Church was still suffering bitter persecution. Utah had not yet achieved statehood. Horace probably grew in spirituality from his experience of living with Apostle Taylor, a son of Pores. John Taylor, 3rd Pres. Of the church.

In the summer of 1889, Horace was courting lovely Jensine Christensen who lived in Hyde Park. She had a chance to go to Salt Lake City with her brother who was being married in the Endowment House. Horace drove from Riverton to Salt Lake City to get her in a cart drawn by a very large stallion. Jensine was very frightened to ride behind such a large horse through the streets of Salt Lake City, However, they arrived safely at Apostle Taylor’s home, had dinner there, and was treated very courteously.

On 5 March 1890, Horace and Jensine Christensen were married in the Logan Temple by Apostle Marriner W. Merrill. Horace’s brother, Jesse, was married the same day. The 2 couples went to Logan in a sled drawn by a white horse and a mule. It was said that Horace had to switch the team a good part of the way to make them go faster for fear they might be late for the Temple Session.

Jensine had emigrated to Hyde Park with her family from Ustrup, Aalborg, Denmark, when she was 5 years old. Horace called her “Zina” a nickname for Jensine, pronounced Jensina. Jensine was a good woman, very modest and delicate of nature. She suffered much ill during her life, but she had a strong testimony of the Gospel, and a family and a husband to care for, which
kept her going. Her husband was patient and good to her, which was a great blessing. She could not have withstood a husband who was crude or ungentlemanly in nature, nor one who lived unrighteously. When the children were ill, she cared for them in the most exquisite manner, hovering over them with love and tenderness. Her delicate nature and purity made it difficult for her to talk to her children about certain facts of life, but as they learned for themselves they knew from their parents’ example that morality was sacred, and not something to joke about or be taken lightly. To Horace and Jensine, it meant everything that their children live righteous and upright lives.

The first home for Horace and Jensine was in Hyde Park, and was one room they rented. Most of their furniture was made by Horace, his father James, and his brother Jim. They lived at several different locations in Hyde Park, around the cemetery or the bench land. Their last home was on a large lot at 190 West 200 North in Hyde Park.

Horace and Jensine were the parents of 7 children: Bernard William, Clive, Ruby Dorthea, Cora, Fern, Cleta and Thelma Bernice. They had their sorrows and disappointments as their first born son, Bernard, died from diarrhea complications at 20 months of age, and their daughter Cora, a young wife expectant mother, died in the flu epidemic of 1919.

Horace was an ambitious, hard-working man. He was taught to work by his father who was an expert cabinet maker, and as a young boy Horace learned to build. Horace acquired farm land in Hyde Park and engaged in farming. He always had cows, pigs, chicken, etc. and was a wonderful gardener. People always said that Horace Hancey and a weed couldn’t live on the same lot. It wasn’t always easy to find employment and keep bread on the table for a large family, and any ambitious man would take what work he could get, and feel blessed for it. Horace took many odd jobs and seasonal jobs. He worked at the Morgan Canning Co. in Smithfield canning peas. He weighed sugar beets for the Amalgamated Sugar Co. During the 1920's he was store room manager and station man for the Amalgamated Sugar Co. In Amalga. He never owned an automobile by which he could travel back and forth each day to work, so he lived with his oldest daughter, Ruby and her husband, John Milligan and family. John was also employed by the Sugar factory and was instrumental in helping Horace secure work there. Horace traveled home to Hyde Park on weekends, probably by horse and buggy.

The story is told that when the first “Red Devils” (automobile) came to Hyde Park, and everyone would line up along the streets or run into their front yards to see them, Horace said “That’s a fad that won’t last long.” Little did he realize how the invention of the automobile would change the world.

Horace had a great love for the Bible and other standard works of the Church. He read extensively in all of them. He must have thought that all people felt the same way, for he either took money he had saved, or sold his land (it is not sure which) and bought church books. He traveled into Eastern Idaho and Montana for some months to preach the Gospel and give or sell the books to interested people. He had received a call to fill a mission, but was unable to go because of Jensine’s poor health. He always felt badly that he could not go, but accepted well his responsibilities at home. Perhaps his travels in Idaho and Montana, preaching the Gospel and distributing church books, helped to satisfy his desire for missionary work. From this experience, no one but the Lord knows what seeds may have been planted and who benefitted from his efforts but surely his family and posterity should be able to see and learn from such an unselfish act that Horace lived what he believed, and practiced the law of sacrifice.

In a religious way, Horace was very active. He always took a leading part in the ward.
For many years he taught the “Parents Class,” as it was called in Sunday School. He was active in Priesthood work and was president of the High Priest Quorum. He worked in all of the organizations of the Church in the Ward and served faithfully in his callings. He was often called to administer unto the sick, and he always went. He had a deep faith. He did a lot of temple work as well as genealogy. He wrote treatises on Gospel Doctrine subjects. He was well versed in the scriptures and could always quote chapter and verse to prove his points.

His word was as good as gold. If he made a promise, it was kept, if he had any faults, perhaps it was that he couldn’t see why all people didn’t love and live the Gospel as he did. The Bishop said many times that Horace was the largest tithe payer in Hyde Park. He didn’t make the most money by any means, but it was honest. If he sold a head of cabbage from his garden, it was marked down in his book and tithed.

Horace was secretary of the Hyde Park Canal Co. For many years and was a very efficient man at book work. He belonged to the Hyde Park Dramatic Co. And acted in many dramas in the early days. One remembered is that he was one of the villains in the play “Ten Nights in a Bar Room.”

Horace was a family man and spent time with his children. He made his children feel work was fun as they helped him in the garden. He enjoyed rocking his children and singing to them. He would close his eyes and sing by the hour in the evening. Of course, he sang all the old time songs and some are pretty pathetic, but he loved to sing them. He loved to tell them stories, but most of all, he taught them the Gospel—to love it and to live it. He was willing to give of his time in helping others. Several young people would come to him for help with their lessons, writing talks, valedictory addresses and other assignments. He had many good ideas, used good grammar and was always willing to help He enjoyed writing, and for many years was correspondent for the Logan newspapers. He reported the Hyde Park news, and his articles were well written with a poetical sensitivity and with sincere compassion. He wrote many poems that were printed in the newspapers.

Horace was of an inquisitive mind in practical things. He was particularly interested in the mystery of creation, life and matter. He spent many of his most pleasurable moments prospecting for minerals in our nearby mountains. He believed in the prophecy made by Brigham Young that the great Wasatch Range of Mountains contained untold wealth and that this wealth would be discovered and exploited in due time.

Horace with several of his friends, among whom might be mentioned, Bishop Charles G. Hyde, Rosel Hyde, William Cook and Andrew Woolf, spent some time and means each summer on a prospect at the mouth of Dry Hollow just east of Hyde Park, a property that was later acquired by the Utah Standard Mines Co. Of Logan, Utah, of which his son-in-law, H. C. Hansen was president. He was employed by this company for several seasons. He considered them among the most enjoyable and profitable of his life. He was substantially interested in it until the time of his death.

Horace William Hancey was a good and virtuous man of high integrity, handsome and medium of build, with alive, twinkling eyes, and a deep dimple in his chin, so deep that he had to use scissors to cut out the whiskers he could not reach with his razor. He wore a mustache most of his adult life.

He was a true Latter-Day Saint who possessed a gentle and understanding nature, and a deep sense of what was right. He looked for the good in people and had a great desire to serve the Lord. He was innocent and pure of mind, educated, a hard worker and faithful to his wife and
family. As was the case with most folks of the day, he had little of the world’s riches, but he possessed great spiritual wealth which many never acquire. He sought more for the riches of eternity than for material wealth. He took his spiritual talents with him when he returned to our Father in Heaven, but left a rich religious heritage for his posterity.

Horace William Hancey passed on to his reward 7 Feb. 1931, after one week’s illness of pneumonia. He is buried in the Hyde Park Cemetery. A quote from the Herald Journal: “Speakers paid tribute to the honesty, faith, character and service and devotion to his vocational calling and to his family, church and friends. The testimony of all was that Mr. Hancey, insofar as known, had no enemies, but a host of friends, all of whom respected him for his stability and integrity of character. Mr. Hancey possessed marked ability as a poet and was known as one who had acquired a great deal of scriptural knowledge.”

As has been stated. Horace wrote much poetry. The family suggest we include his poem “My Mountain Home” as it depicts the beauty of Hyde Park, his love for it and his hopes for the future of the people.

**MY MOUNTAIN HOME**

Yes, my mountain home, I love thee; Of thy beauty I will sing of thy high and lofty mountains Where the lovely flowers spring. Where all nature’s clothes in beauty, Where the wild deer fleetly roam, Filling every heart with gladness in our love mountain home.

In the vales I love to wander Midst the green and shady trees: Hear the soft & gentle murmur As it’s wafted o’er the breeze There we see the busy reaper Cutting down the golden Corn; Hear the tinkling of the cowbell In our lovely mountain home.

Thy high mountains in their grandeur, Towering upward to the sky, Seem to whisper, “We’ll protect you, And your enemies defy.” The pure streams are onward rushing. Throwing up the milk-white foam, While the birds are sweetly singing All around our mountain home.

O’er thy lovely hills and valleys May thy beauties never cease; May thy noble sons and daughters Ere be blessed with joy and peace. May their footsteps never falter, But may the God of Heaven Ever bless our Mountain Home.

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