

Isaac Brockbank Jr. (1837-1927)

A Short Sketch by Robert N. Reynolds

The perception I have of my great-grandfather Isaac Brockbank Jr. is one of a rather stern businessman with a strong testimony of the Restored Gospel. I have also come to learn that he was a precise and articulate writer and man of considerable intellect.

There is no question about the tough lessons he learned as a child, as described in his biographies of his parents, although it is good to know that he also created some fond memories of his boyhood days in the English countryside. He was born on July 13, 1837 at Liverpool, Lancashire, England, just a little over 100 years before my own birthday. His upbringing, as documented in his own writings, describe a youth who learned how to work at a very young age and who was surrounded by strong-willed adults who believed in tough discipline. He "crossed the plains" as a fifteen year old youth but finished the trek as a man.



Isaac Brockbank Jr. married two wives. He fathered thirteen children with his first wife Katherine Alice Howard and eleven children with my great-grandmother, Mary Ann Park. His experience with the doctrine of plural marriage was sometimes difficult because his first wife evidently had second thoughts about his entering into the everlasting covenant. He paid a heavy price for his convictions and choice of lifestyle with a heavy fine and serving over five months in prison. In his writings he testified that the principle was from God and was correct.

My Brockbank progenitors were known for their strong wills, their deep testimonies, and their stern mannerisms. They had a strong sense of duty to serve their neighbors and their hearts were filled with love for the Savior, their families and all mankind.

Autobiography of Isaac Brockbank Jr.¹

"As I recall my childhood and events and happenings, they may not be exact as I view them from the age of fifty years and my memory may not be too good. During week days I attended Cornwallis Street School, and though I was not more than seven or eight years old, I was set to teach a class of still younger children. On Sunday we attended a Methodist Sunday School."



The English countryside north of Liverpool and in the Lake Windermere region.

This photo is by Galen R. Frysiinger www.galenfrysiinger.com.

"At one time we moved into my mother's mother's home to help with her care as she had not been well for some years. At this time I attended St. John's Church School in Great Cross Hall Street, both day and Sunday School. I made good progress in my studies there, and for my age was considered a fair scholar in the common branches. The head master was named Strict, and he was strict by name and by nature. I was placed in charge of a class of smaller children in this school also. It was a requirement of this school that all who attended the day school must also attend the Sabbath School and the church services. My father, having been

¹ This is a shortened version from Isaac Jr.'s autobiography, published in 1951. This autobiography was started in 1887 and added to at various times in his life. It is from a copy in the family files. The photos are from my personal files or by permission from www.galenfrysiinger.com.

converted to Mormonism, was opposed to my remaining at this school. So I went to Christ Church School and attended the Mormon services on Sunday."

"When my father was in the meat business he bought a delivery cart and horse. It was my duty to travel around town to the retail butcher shops each week and collect the money due us. On one occasion I had a load of meat and when I was going down a steep hill the animal I was driving became unmanageable. At a cross street I made a turn, as I knew the cart would pile up at the bottom. This turn was so sudden that I was thrown off the cart, which turned over. The meat was upset and the horse ran off as hard as it could go. I sustained injuries and bruises and both of my knee bones were knocked out of joint, and the main bones of my legs were injured."



"In 1848 I left school and went as an office boy to a firm of attorneys and solicitors. My duties were to copy letters, run errands, carry mail to and from the post office, and make copies of legal documents. For a short time I went to the Mechanics Institute and Advanced School. It was at this time that my father made preparations to go to America. I was very desirous of seeing my father's relatives

before leaving the country. They lived about sixty miles north of Liverpool on the banks of beautiful Windermere Lake. I was very much attached to this place, among so many who took an interest in me, the beautiful scenery and the opportunity for pleasure in the boats. My relatives were very desirous to have me remain with them."

"After the family emigrated to this country we settled in Spanish Fork. I helped my father with the farm and the stock. We went through several winters when food was very scarce. There were also Indian uprisings and it was my duty to help guard the settlement. In the winter of 1856 an Elder's Quorum was organized in the Spanish Fork Ward and I was ordained and appointed clerk of the same. I had previously, been ordained a Priest in 1852."

"In the fall of 1858 I opened a small business in American Fork selling general dry goods and groceries. At that time, in partnership with another man, we obtained contracts for carrying U. S. mail south of Salt Lake City. I set up the route and provided animals along the way. One night the animal I rode, not being fully broken, got scared and threw me out of the saddle to the ground. I was over thirty-five miles from any settlement and on foot. There was a light snow on the ground and I

tried to keep up with the horse and ran, following him the whole distance. Fortunately for me the horse came to the place where he got his grain. He had kept the saddle on and the mail was safe."



Katherine Alice Howard Brockbank

"In the spring of 1858 I met the family of William Howard. Their eldest daughter, Kate, was not indifferent to my overtures, and I made it convenient to visit their home in Cottonwood. Our attachment ripened into love and we married June 25, 1860. I then became associated with my father-in-law in the tannery business. We did fairly well and lived in comparative comfort."



Mary Ann Park Brockbank

"I married Mary Ann Park in January of 1865. Her family was one of those designated by President Young to aid in the settlement of Provo."

Isaac Brockbank Jr.

"My experience with the practice of plural marriage has not been as pleasant as I could wish. Never the less, I have this testimony to bear: that I know for myself that it was ordained of God and is designed for the purification of His children. When practiced according to the requirements of the Gospel it will bring peace, joy and happiness to both men and women who embrace it."

"A contract with the Union Pacific Railroad to build a section of that road was entered into by Pres. Young during the winter of 1867. I had teams and wagons and a hired man and joined with a number of others to do this work. The road-bed was to be from Echo Canyon to Promontory Point."

"For a short time I was engaged in the mining business with Mr. Howard but it was not successful as the claims proved worthless."

"I was set apart as a counselor to Bishop Sheets of the Eighth Ward in 1871, continuing in this position for twenty years. This same year I was engaged to keep accounts, particularly of livestock, as a clerk in the Tithing Office. At the death of Brigham Young I was one of the watchers over his corpse the night before the funeral."

"The Edwards Law, making it a crime to live under polygamy, was passed by Congress in 1882. I was continually cautioned to beware of this and to go away from home if I wanted to stay out of prison. My duties at the Tithing Office were such that I was busy all of the time, and I considered this to be of utmost importance. Hundreds of the brethren were arrested and sentenced for the full term of six months and the payment of the extreme amount of \$300. In September of 1886 a warrant was issued for my arrest. I posted a bond of \$1,000 and went about my business. My family was then called to appear before the Grand Jury. In order to spare them the pain of appearing I made application to appear before the Grand Jury and answer any questions they "might have. This I did in order that they



might not be degraded. With many other brethren I pleaded guilty and we were sent to the State Prison for a term of six months and fined the extreme amount. We were placed with all manner of criminals from murderers and thieves to all kinds of evil men. This was a most trying time and though many of the brethren were men of good breeding we were jeered at by these men."

"After my release I undertook a contract to build a railroad bed or grade of fourteen miles, from the shores of Great Salt Lake to the City. This is now the present Saltair Railroad. I also did the excavating for some of the buildings in Salt Lake City, among them the Cathedral of the Madeline, the Consolidated Wagon, and the site of the store where Acerbates store is now. I have also served Salt Lake County as Bailiff and Deputy Sheriff. At various times I have ventured into the mining business, but mostly with disastrous results."

*"My wife, **Katherine**, though always delicate, raised seven children to maturity. She has also been active in the women's organizations of the Church. She was Counselor of the Granite Stake Relief Society for twelve years. She is a member of the Press Club and of the Daughters of the Pioneers. She came to Utah in 1853 with her parents, who were among the first settlers of Cottonwood."*



Six of Isaac Jr. and "Kate's" thirteen children died in infancy. Here in the Salt Lake Cemetery are the graves of Victoria Reid (1862-1863), Josephine (1861-1861), William Howard (1866-1867), and Isaac (1864-1864), named from left to right. Mt. Olympus looms in the background.

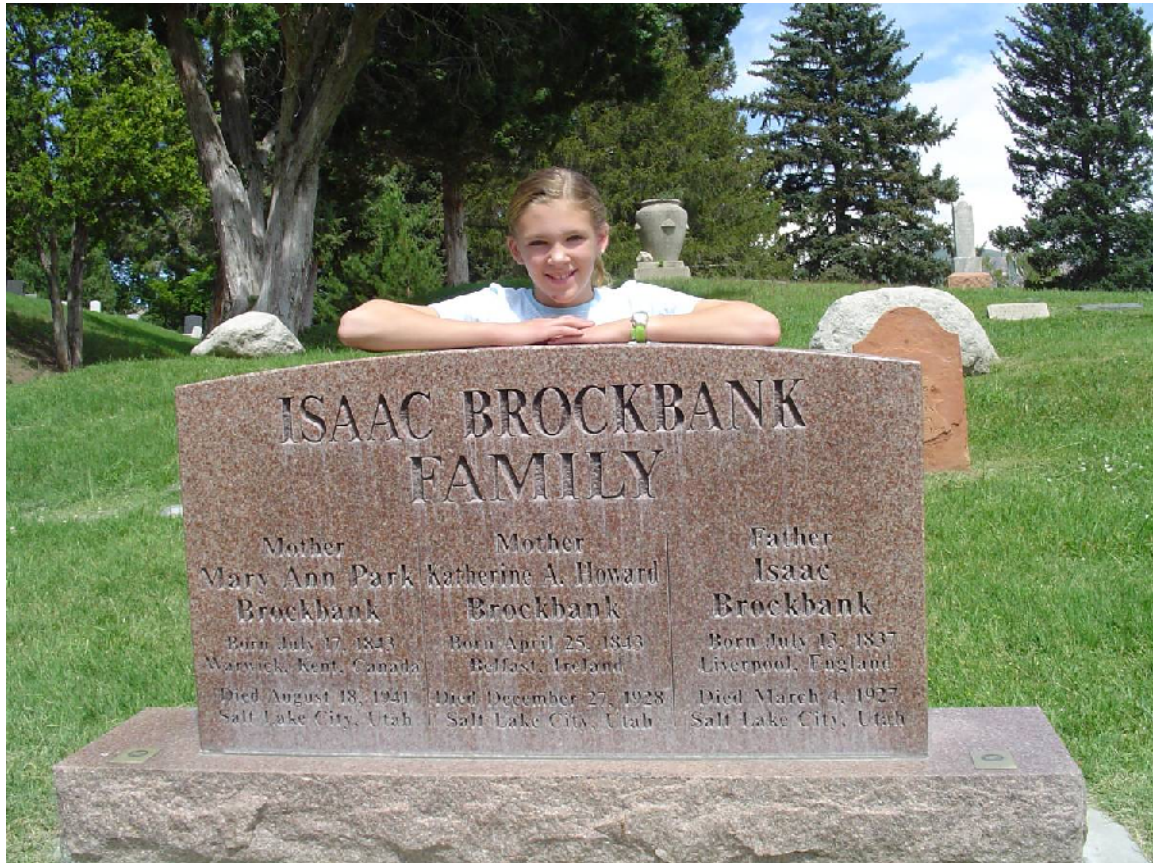
*"My wife, **Mary Ann Park**, raised ten of her children to man and womanhood. She has been a good mother and Latter-day Saint, and has trained her family in the ways of the gospel. Mary Ann came to Utah in September of 1847, being a little more than three years old. Of the great journey she remembers vividly the herds of buffalo and the many Indians — many of them were not very friendly."*



Mary Ann Park Brockbank is pictured sitting here with her three daughters who reached adulthood, from left, Agnes Park (1881-1927), Mary Park (1873-1968), and Louise Park (1869-1963). Two daughters died during childhood, Jane Park at age ten, and Mary Ellen Park at age six. Mary Ann must have felt pretty strong about her maiden name because she gave the name Park to each of her eleven children. Louise Park is my grandma and a good one she was.

"I was elected a member of the Salt Lake City Council in February of 1878. Among the items considered at this time were the improvement and management of the City Cemetery, also the management of the City Jail, the treatment and economy of handling the housing and feeding of prisoners. Another very important matter was the necessity of having an increased water supply. Methods of constructing canals and using those in existence was discussed at length, but this was not passed at

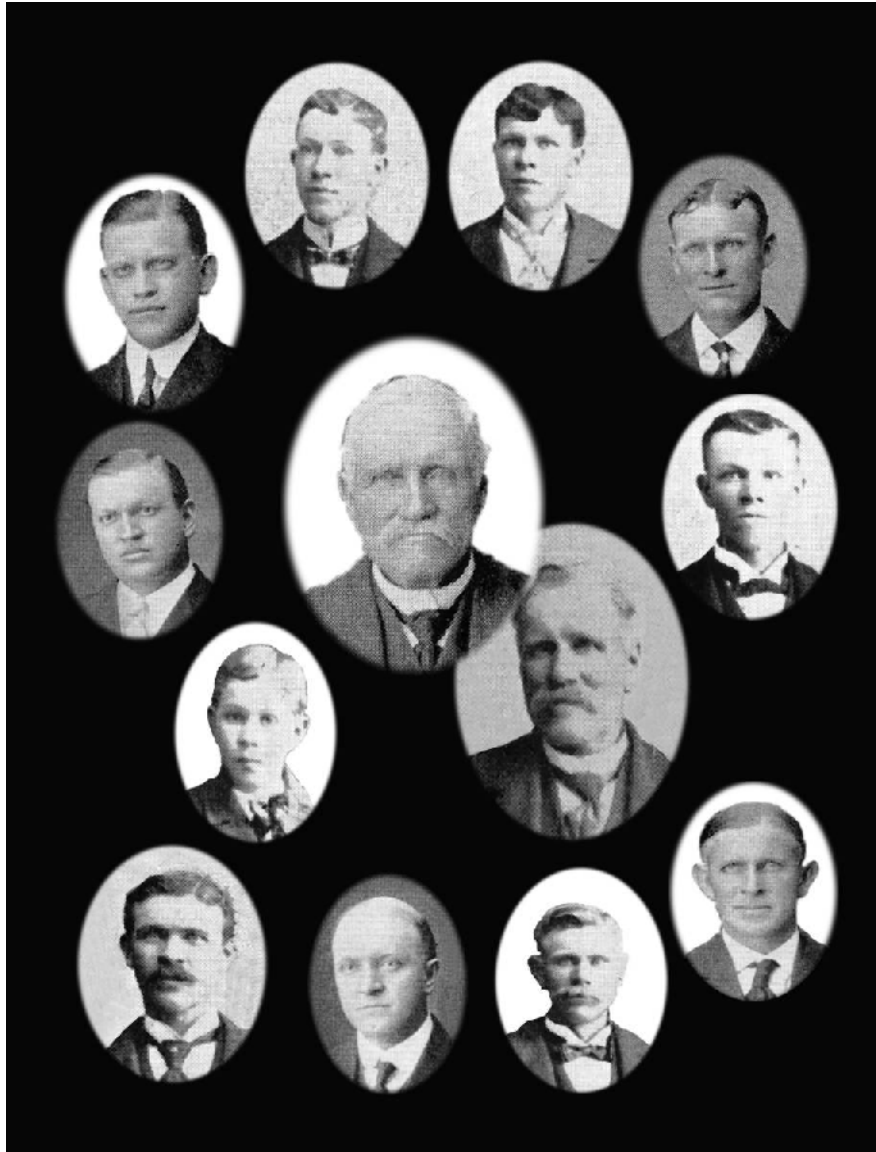
this time. Later it was done at considerable more cost than if it had been handled according to the recommendations made at this time. This would have taken care of the city's water needs for years." Isaac Brockbank Jr.



The Isaac Brockbank Jr. Memorial at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. This photo with granddaughter April Reynolds at the gravesite was taken during the summer of 2004 by the author.

The Sons of Isaac Brockbank Jr.

Eleven of Isaac's sons survived their childhood. The collage below joins into one the sons of his two wives. It is unlikely they ever came together for a group photo.



Two overlying photos of the fifty-eight year old and older Isaac Jr. set the central focus of this collage with the sons arranged counter-clockwise in descending age. Starting in the bottom left corner is John Park (1867-1938), Daniel Erin (1870-1939), Heber Park (1870-1949), Lucas Thurber (1872-1956), James William Park (1874-1962), Albert Ernest (1875-1944), Joseph Park (1876-1919), Taylor Park (1879-1957), Lockhart Howard (1881-1957), George Mainwaring (1883-1940), and Alma Park (1885-1977). Isaac passed away on March 4, 1927, at the age of eighty-nine years.