

## MARTHA HAMER



Martha Hamer was born July 1, 1826 in Bolton, Lancashire, England. She was the daughter of Samuel Hamer and Jane Thornley. She was christened in the parish of Bolton le Moors on August 11, 1826. Martha's father worked as an engineer, fixing and maintaining machinery.

Martha was the oldest daughter in the family. She had a brother, John who was two years old when she was born. The family lived in Bolton, where two more sisters, Nancy and Ellen, and two brothers, James and Samuel were born. In 1835, when Martha was nine years old the family moved to Tottington. Tottington was about four miles north of Bolton. Two more sisters, Jane and Ann, and a brother, another James, were born in Tottington.

11 737	Martha dau: of Samuel & Jane Hamer	Great Bolton	Spinster
12 738	James dau: of Samuel & Jane Hamer	Great Bolton	Engineer

Christening record for Martha Hamer in Bolton

In 1838, the British Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was opened in the nearby town of Preston. Martha was twelve years old the year the mission opened. The Hamer family heard the gospel and were converted. They emigrated to the United States to join the Saints in late 1840 or early 1841.

PLACE	HOUSES Inhabited Uninhabited	NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night	AGE SEX	PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
					Male	Female
Tottington Mills		John Hamer	47	Engineer	21	
		Sarah	17		21	
		John	15	Engineer	21	
		John	13	Engineer	21	
		Richard	23	Machinist	21	
		Richard	17		21	
		William	29	Large painter	21	
		John	28		21	
		Thomas	8		21	
		William	4		21	
		John	1		21	
		John	13	Eng. Man	21	
		John	3.5		21	
		John	15	Eng.	21	
Tottington Mills		George	7		21	
		John	6		21	
		Ellen	2		21	
		John	20	Eng.	21	
		John	23	Eng.	21	
		Sam <sup>l</sup> Hamer	35	Engineer	21	
		John	3.5		21	
		John	16	Subsist	21	
		Martha	14	Spinster	21	
		John	13		21	
		John	8		21	
		John	11		21	
		John	11		21	
		John	11		21	
TOTAL in 2					13	12
Page 10					13	12

1841 British census, Tottington Mill

The Hamer family appeared in the English census in Tottington Mill in 1841. Martha was 14 years old, and working as a stitcher. The record shows:

*Saml Hamer, 35, Engineer*  
*Jane Hamer, 35*  
*Jno Hamer, 16, Mechanic*  
*Martha Hamer, 14, Stitcher*  
*Nancy Hamer, 13*  
*Saml Hamer, 8*  
*Jane Hamer, 5*  
*James Hamer, 3*  
*Ann Hamer, 1*

The Hamers immigrated to the United States in February of 1842 on the ship *Hope*. The passenger list for the *Hope* shows:

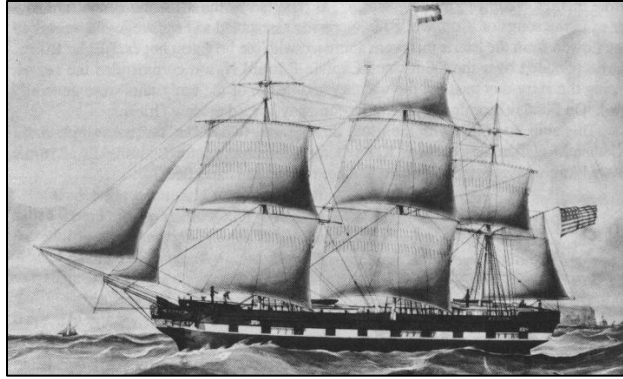
Age	Name	Sex	Occupation
38	Saml	Male	Miller
39	Jane	Female	
17	Jno	Male	
14	Martha	Female	
13	Nancy	Female	
8	Saml	Male	
5	Jane	Female	
3	James	Male	
1	Ann	Female	

*Ship's passenger list for the Hope, showing the Hamer family*

*Samuel Hamer, age 38, origin England, occupation: Miller*  
*Jane Hamer, age 39*  
*John Hamer, age 17*  
*Martha Hamer, age 14*  
*Nancy Hamer, age 12*  
*Samuel Hamer, age 10*  
*Jane Hamer, age 6*  
*James Hamer, age 4*  
*Anne Hamer, age 2*

Joseph is listed separately:  
*Joseph Hamer, infant, origin England*

*Sources: New Orleans, 1820-1850 Passenger and Immigration Lists, www.ancestry.com; Mormon Immigration Index CD. In the Mormon Immigration Index Joseph Hamer is shown as an infant, the other family members are extracted in the CD as "Hanna". Since baby Joseph was most likely not traveling alone, and ages for the others match, it is assumed that Hamer was wrongly translated as Hanna for the other family members. In the Ancestry.com list the family is listed as Hamer.*



*The Ship Hope*

The *Hope* sailed from Liverpool on 5 February 1842, under Captain Soule. There were 270 LDS immigrants. The LDS leader was James Burnham. The voyage was described in several journals: *"She got out of dock on Friday 3rd Feb. and she was towed down the river on Saturday morning by a steamer about 8 miles and on Sunday morning we passed the land of Ireland... We saw a number of fish called porpoises, and on Wednesday 8th we had a strong head wind, and Thursday 9th it blew a strong gale of wind... Wednesday the 2 March the same as yesterday. I saw one flying fish today and one yesterday. Saw a vessel at a great distance we thought making for England. 30 March Wednesday morning the steam boat Star arrived and took us in tow about 9 o'clock in the morning... and took us in tow up the great Mississippi River and when we got up the river some distance on Thursday morning the 31 March we came in sight of a most beautiful country diversified with plantations farm house, sugar manufactories, and beautiful cottages and wooded on each side of the river and on 1st April we got to New Orleans and safe and sound and on the second April we chartered a steam boat Louisa commanded by Captain H.C. Cable to St. Louis."* (Richard Rushton)

The company of Saints traveled up the Mississippi and joined the Saints at Nauvoo. The ship arrived on 1 April 1842. The History of Joseph Smith records: *"About one hundred and fifty Saints from England, landed in Nauvoo from the steamer Louisa, and about sixty from the steamer Amaranth."*



*The Hamer's property in Nauvoo - the Sarah Granger Kimball house is shown at the left side of the picture*

The Hamers came to Nauvoo, where they lived in a small house on Lot 74, a few blocks from the Nauvoo Temple site, towards the river. Family stories indicate that Martha's sister, Jane, worked for the Prophet Joseph Smith. Perhaps it was the mother, Jane, who worked there, as little Jane Hamer would have only been six years old at this time. One of the Hamer's next-door neighbors, Sarah Granger Kimball and her seamstress, became concerned about the worn shirts that the men wore when they worked on building the temple. They organized a group of women to sew shirts for the temple workers. This group became the Relief Society.

The Hamer family met a handsome, dark-haired young man at about this time. John Haslam became like one of the family, and went to work with Samuel Hamer doing blacksmithing. The family was saddened when Samuel Hamer died, of "*ague and fever*" in August 1843. This was most likely malaria due to the damp conditions and mosquitoes near the river. Martha was seventeen when her father died. The family came together during this difficult time to support each other. They were always a close family and stayed together through many trials.

In 1845, nineteen-year-old Martha agreed to marry John Haslam. They were married by John's good friend, Orson Hyde, in St. Louis on March 4, 1845. John and Martha came to Nauvoo to start their marriage in July or August of 1845. This was a difficult time for the Saints as they worked to finish the Nauvoo Temple under increasing persecution. John and Martha were blessed to receive their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple on January 30, 1846. Their first child, Jane Ellen, was born the next month. In February, the Saints began to leave Nauvoo. By July, most of them had left. John and Martha, and their new baby were still in the city in September of 1846, when the mobs decided to drive the remaining few Saints from the city. It must have been a terrifying time for the new mother. John, and two of Martha's brothers operated cannons during the Battle of Nauvoo, fighting the mob militia. An eye witness records, "*Our devoted city was defended by about 150 poor, sickly persecuted Saints, while it was cannonaded by about 1,500 to 2,000 demoniacs, in the shape of men, who had sworn to raze our temple to the ground, to burn the city, to ravish our wives and our daughters, and drive the remainder into the river.*" Some of the brave women in Nauvoo were said to have helped gather up cannon balls in their aprons. Other sisters assembled on porches out of range of the guns, listening to every sound of the conflict. One sister wrote, "*The anguish and suspense of those dreadful hours can never be told in words. And I will never forget the unflinching faith and courage of that devoted group of women. They never thought of fleeing or turning away.*" *Church News*, 9/14/96. The Saints were forced to surrender and escape across the river, with very few possessions.

The family made their way to Winter Quarters, a journey of 300 miles. The journey across Iowa territory was difficult. "*Refugee camps of five to six hundred dispossessed men, women, and children, including those who had been left as too sick to travel, were scattered along two miles of riverbank above Montrose, Iowa. Most people had only blankets or bowers made of brush for shelter and little more than boiled or parched corn to eat. On 9 October, when food was in especially short supply several large flocks of quail flew into camp and landed on the ground and even on tables. Many of them were caught, cooked, and eaten by the hungry Saints. To the faithful it was a sign of God's mercy...Rescue teams arrived in time to save the Saints from starvation and winter exposure. The poor Saints were dispersed throughout various camps in western Iowa. A handful made it all the way to Winter Quarters.*" (*Church History in the Fullness of Times*)

The family built a one-room cottage of logs. John used his blacksmithing skills to help outfit the Saints for their western trek at Brigham Young's request. John and Martha's first son, Joseph, was born in

Winter Quarters in 1848. John and Martha's brother, Samuel, helped operate a ferry to help the Saints cross the Missouri River. The Council Bluffs Ferry, also known as Ferryville, was opposite the river from Winter Quarters.

The Haslam and Hamer families are found living together in the 1850 census in Pottawattamie County, Iowa:

25		Assessment	2		
26	774	John Amer	21	M	Potackomah
27		Elizabeth	18	F	
28		John Haslam	27	M	
29		Martha	24	F	
30		Jane	4		
31		John	2	M	
32		Jane Amer	49	F	
33		Samuel	17	M	Assess
34		Jane	15	F	
35		Jane	13	M	
36		Assess	12	F	
37	775	Robert Haslam	24	M	Potackomah
38		Elizabeth	27	F	
39		William	16	M	Assess
40	776	William Smith	40		

A second son, Samuel Hamer Haslam, was born in Ferryville in 1851. That year the family decided that it was time to cross the plains to Utah. Martha's mother, and brothers and sisters prepared to cross with the Orson Pratt company.

Martha had a new baby, a three-year-old son, and a five-year-old daughter to care for as they crossed the plains. Most of the trip was in mud, and then snow. Martha's sister would recount how difficult it was to walk in their long skirts, "They were always frozen with either snow or mud, as they couldn't get them dry at night around a campfire. Many nights they were forced to sleep in their wet clothes as they were short of bedding, and all through Wyoming it was snow sixteen inches deep at times and the men pulling handcarts through it." (John Henry Haslam) John and Martha had the only wagon in the group, so it was used for the sick and little ones. The family nearly starved to death in Wyoming. Martha's daughter, Jane Ellen remembered "walking most of the way across the plains with her mother and four-year-old brother, hand in hand, and caring for another baby brother. She related many faith-promoting stories and said that "only through the help of the Lord were their lives spared." (Gerald B. Haycock, on file at Land and Records Office, Nauvoo)





*John Haslam and Martha Hamer Haslam*

They arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in October of 1851. Martha was six months pregnant. John went to work in the Church blacksmith shop. Martha dedicated herself to their growing family. She worked hard to care for her family, *“The slogan ‘necessity is the mother of invention’ could very well have originated with the Mormon pioneer woman. Out of necessity she was forced to make do —if she didn’t have one ingredient, she adapted other foods to the situation. She often cooked under the worst possible conditions; she didn’t have to worry about leaking ceilings, she had to worry about leaking skies...She arrived with very little other than her resourcefulness, creativity and imagination. Her pride was involved in turning out the best. She had to maintain a clean house, wash, mend clothes and prepare good, satisfying meals.”* (*The Mormon Pioneer Cookbook*)



Martha’s mother, Jane Hamer, must have been a great resource to her. She was known for her resourcefulness: *“Jane was a midwife, and her skills were a great blessing to the sick while crossing the plains. Her son, Samuel, remembered her determination and economy. He was always proud to tell of his mother’s foresightedness. He told us of how she would prepare the bones and small pieces of meat for their immediate meals, drying and saving the larger pieces for the future. When his gun would bring down a prairie chicken or two, his mother would cook the forepart of the bird, and would dry the legs and hang them up by pieces of string to the beams of the wagon in the manner which she dried the pieces of meat. He told of how his mother made soda from salratis which she gathered from the wayside, of how she made soap.”* (Nellie Hamer Reiser) These skills would have been a great help to Martha as she tried to make a happy home in this new world.

The Haslam family was growing. A daughter, Martha Ann, was born in 1852. A son, Thomas was born in 1855. Elizabeth came next, in 1857. Another son, Brigham, was born in 1860. He was the first of Martha's children to die as a child.

1		Jane Woodman	12	m		
2		Laura J.	4	f		
3	1227	Unoccupied				
4	1225 101	John H. Haslam	38	m	Blacksmith	400
5		Martha	24	f		
6		Jane A.	13	f		
7		John J.	11	m		
8		Samuel	8	m		
9		Martha A.	6	f		
10		Thomas	4	m		
11		Elizabeth	3	f		
12		Brigham	2 1/2	m		
13	1229	Unoccupied				
14	1230 102	William J. Payer	28	m	Journeyman Blacksmith	50
15		Nancy	30	f		
16		Sylvia J.	8	f		
17		Nancy H.	5	f		
18		Emma A.	4	f		

1860 census, Salt Lake City, Utah

A year later, in 1861, William was born. Mary was born two years later, in 1863. Joshua was born in 1865. Finally, Ruth was born in 1867. Martha was the mother of eleven children. She had six sons and five daughters. The last baby, Ruth, was a difficult birth for the forty-one-year-old Martha. Martha died ten days after the birth of complications due to childbirth, on June 6, 1867. The baby only lived for three months.



Martha Hamer

Her pictures show a beautiful, clear-eyed young woman. She raised a righteous posterity. Her life was one of courage and obedience to gospel principles.