

David Leonard Savage
compiled by Sherry B. Cook

“I, David Savage, was the son of Roger Savage who was the son of Thomas Savage who emigrated from England and settled in Old Harford, being a sea captain. My father was born in that place and became a tailor, married Phoebe Stevens and removed to Canada in the Township of Leeds and county of Leeds on Canada West where I was born.”

David Savage was 23 years old when he was married to 21 year old Theodotia Finch on 5, February 1834. She was born on 21, May 1812 in Johnstown, Leeds, Ontario, Canada, a daughter of George and Betsy Finch. Her father was from Nova Scotia. The only child born to this couple was Polly Amanda in 1836 at Leads, Upper Canada. David's wife, Theodotia died two months later, only 24 years of age. David hired first one relative and then another to care for his little girl.

Even though David was born and reared in Canada he still felt some degree of allegiance to the States. The year of 1838 was one of upheaval and distress for the Saints and the year that David became acquainted with the Church. He writes, “Being a Patriot, I was driven from my country and passing through Michigan into Ohio I came to Lafayette where I tended bar for S.Y. Melvin who was very prejudiced against the Latter-day Saints and thought that they would all steal and I told him to let them come and treat them decent and if they stole anything I would pay for it so he agreed to it and it soon became a Mormon tavern and the landlord soon concluded that they would not steal.”

Lafayette lies some 70-80 miles north of Dayton and could well have been on the way for the Saints traveling from the areas around Kirtland to Missouri. When the missionaries of the Canada Camp stopped at Lafayette David met Elder John E. Page. “When the Canada Camp came he (S.V. Melvin) sent me to invite them to stop there. They preached three times and went from there to Dayton. I visited them [bought] some books and was urged by Elder Page to join the church, but I refused, which I ever regret. He is my spiritual father whom I shall always love.”

With the extermination order of Governor Boggs and the expulsion of the Saints from Missouri in 1838 they fled to Illinois. The people of Illinois welcomed the saints and many of them settled in Quincy. Many



**David Leonard Savage
and perhaps his second wife,
Mary Abigail White**

of the saints were destitute; they had suffered from the elements, and were starving. Those who could took the saints into their homes. It was in this condition that David found them. He continues, “I left that place (Lafayette, Ohio) for Far West and the first season that the saints settled here I came and found them in a very bad condition and I went to getting logs to build houses and took a job of wood [to] give the poor saints work but falling sick was confined all winter.”

David made his way to Macedonia County where he stayed three months then moved to Knox County where his brother Jehiel was living. He states, “I joined the Church in July 1840 while at Walnut Grove, Knox County, Illinois, being baptized and ordained an Elder by Jehiel Savage”, who was his brother. He was then ordained to the office of Elder by Jehiel and John Sanders. Soon after this he performed a short mission. David was the only family member to remain in the church. His brothers Jehiel and William, eventually left the church established by Joseph Smith and joined the Strangite church lead by James J. Strang. Jehiel eventually left the Strang church, moved to Iowa, and joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Margaret Judd Clawson, a young girl whose family also joined the Church in Johnstown, moved to New York ... Kirtland, Ohio, then on to Walnut Grove where the Savage family was living, talks about the communi-

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ty and life there. She gives the following description of Walnut Grove: "I don't remember what time we started our journey west, but I do remember in the fall we came to a little place in Illinois called Walnut Grove. There were several "Mormon" families living ... persuaded father to stop over a while, and thus get better prepared to go to Nauvoo. They told him he could get higher wages in Walnut Grove, for the times were hard in Nauvoo, so mother very reluctantly consented to stop. From the time she joined the Church her whole mind and thoughts were to get to the body of the Church".

He was met by his brother Jehial Savage, who preached the restored gospel to him and he was baptized in 1840. On October 14, 1841 David married Mary Abigail White at Walnut Grove, Illinois who was living with her parents. She had been baptized in 1838, by Moses Smith at Santon, Illinois.

Margaret Judd Clawson's family also joined the Church. She gives the following description of Walnut Grove where the Savage family was living:

"I don't remember what time we started our journey west, but I do remember in the fall we came to a little place in Illinois called Walnut Grove. There were several "Mormon" families living here and they persuaded father to stop over a while, and thus get better prepared to go to Nauvoo. They told him he could get higher wages in Walnut Grove, for the times were hard in Nauvoo, so mother very reluctantly consented to stop. From the time she joined the Church her whole mind and thoughts were to get to the body of the Church".

"The greatest recollection I have of the little place was the big watermelons, and the great amount of black walnuts that grew there. Riley (her brother) and myself went one day with father and gathered up a heaping wagon load of walnuts. We put them in the garret of the log house we then lived in and feasted on them all that winter."

In the summer of 1842 they moved to LaHarpe, 25 miles from Nauvoo, a settlement of the Church. David and his father in law bought a farm there. David's daughter Amanda Polly, by his first wife, also moved to LaHarpe and lived with her father and his new family. Their first child, John Roger, was born in December of 1842 and died 10 months later.

In the summer of 1843, David went on a mission

to Michigan returning the next spring to attend conference. During this mission David wrote this letter to "The Times and Seasons" on February 8th, 1844, from St. Joseph, Michigan.

"I am exceedingly happy of the privilege of writing to you to let you know the state of the church, and the minds of the people generally throughout this country, and also to forward you subscribers for [your] invaluable paper, The Times and Seasons.

"There are calls for preaching on every hand and every prospect of an abundant harvest. There are several elders in this neighborhood; but like myself, they are all young in the gospel, and we should esteem it a peculiar privilege if some more experienced elder could come to our assistance, for 'the harvest is great, but the laborers are few.' By the help of our divine master we have been enabled to gather a few sheaves; but there are a certain set of scapegoats running around trying to poison their minds and to rob them of their pearl of great price. Their labors however to the present have proved ineffectual, and "truth prevailed."

During the Nauvoo period the saints unsuccessfully petitioned the United States government three times for redress of grievances related to the Missouri persecutions. The year of 1844 was an election year and Joseph sent letters to the leading candidates to understand their position in regards to the saints. None of the candidates proposed the kind of intervention that the prophet and the members desired. It was proposed by the twelve that they form their own ticket with Joseph Smith as their candidate for president. A committee of fifty was organized on March 11, 1844 to direct the campaign. This group consisted mostly of the church leadership and later became known as the Council of Fifty. By the end of April a list of elders and their campaign assignments was published in the Nauvoo Neighbor. David's name was among them.

This assignment, to electioneer for the Prophet Joseph Smith who was running for the office of President of the United States, again took David to Michigan. This mission he filled with great zeal. His wife accompanied him on this mission. While on this mission David would convert a young man that would later become his son-in-law. His name was Phineas Cook. Phineas and his family lived in the Kalamazoo area. His older sister, Eli-

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za, had “quietly joined the church earlier.” Phineas said, “The two sermons which David Savage preached was all that I had an opportunity of hearing. They had been called home in consequence of the death of Joseph.” The Prophet and his brother Hyrum were assassinated in Carthage Jail.

After the Elders were called home in the summer of 1844, David Savage worked on the Nauvoo Temple and various other occupations. An account of the living conditions of the men and their families and working conditions of the men who labored on the Temple is taken from the Journal of Luman Andrus Shurtliff . “I had helped lay the foundation of our Temple in Nauvoo and now wished to do something more towards the building of it. Accordingly I went to the Temple Committee and hired to them to work on a boat-to-boat rock, timber and wood. I here got provisions to keep my family alive and that is all I expected. The committee did the best they could but they had nothing better in their hand to give us. We labored ten hours a day, day after day, on and in the water and at night go to the Temple office and get something to take to our families for supper and breakfast. Many times we got nothing, at other times we got a half-pound of butter or three pounds of fish, beef, and nothing to cook it with. Sometimes a peck of cornmeal or a few pounds of flour and before any more provisions would come into the office the hands that worked steady would sometimes be entirely out of provisions and have to live on herbs, boiled without any seasoning except salt, or parched com or anything we could get to sustain us. I had some milk from my cows and by putting in half water and if we could get corn or meal, we could live well for these times. For breakfast we would eat a little of this mush and then take a pint of milk in a bottle and some mush in a cup for dinner, go to the boat at six and at noon eat dinner and thank God that I and my family were thus blessed. And often work until dark before I could get home. Then if our cows did not come home, we had to take our mush alone and thank God that we were thus blessed.”

“The reader may think the above mentioned scarcity of provision was confined to my family. Not so, my family was as well off as the majority of my neighbors. I have seen those that cut stone by the year eat nothing but parched or browned corn for breakfast and take

some in their pockets for their dinner and go to work singing the songs of Zion. I mention this not to find fault or to complain but to let my children know how the Temple in Nauvoo was built, and how their parents as well as hundreds of others suffered, to lay a foundation on which they could build and be accepted of God.”

“A great portion of the time sickness or death was in nearly every habitation and some of the time in addition, we had to gird our arms at night and guard the Temple, our streets, landings, and our authorities to keep the enemy from destroying our brethren and our buildings and works and thus break us up or frustrate the work and establishing of this place.”

On January 1, 1845 their second child, Margaret Elizabeth, was born. In the fall of 1845, he was ordained a Seventy in the Second Quorum, and was much pleased when he was chosen to have his endowments in the Nauvoo Temple. David’s autobiography indicates, “In the winter of 1846 Mary and I received our endowments in this temple (David got his on Jan 23).

When the great western move was started he was called to help one of the polygamist families 200 miles on their journey. He took his team and was gone for six weeks. This journey was one of extreme hardship, the snow was so deep, it was bitter cold and horse feed was scarce. To add to his discouragements, one of his horses died. He rode the remaining horse home, leaving the wagon behind. His wife had been left at home alone with two small children and very poorly provided for. David knew not how the way would be opened to move his own family from the terrors of the mob. Those were dark days, but there was a way provided. The family lived there until spring, and then traded their last cow for an old running gear. His neighbor, Brother Clark, kindly let David take his horse as he had two oxen. He also gave him a temporary box for a wagon. By trading his last cow for an old wagon with no box he was ready to leave Nauvoo. In it he carefully packed the necessities that they would need for the trip. His wife Mary wrote, “That was the way we left Nauvoo and were glad to get away. We were in poor circumstances but we did not feel to complain for it was for the gospel’s sake and we were willing to endure all for the good cause.”

They headed out across the Mississippi to join the main body of the saints. David further states, “In May

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1846 I moved my family to Benton's Fort on the Des Moines River where I made up an outfit to come west with and from there to Saup Creek where we wintered. I was placed to preside over the little Branch there. At this place our daughter Margaret Elizabeth died. Our daughter Mary Theodocia was born 28 Feb 1847 here in Davis County Iowa". Mary A. describes their home at the time of the birth of their daughter. It was late in the Iowa winter, cold and snowy. She was born in a little log hut with no windows, no doors and no floor. By hanging things up to the door we were kept quite comfortable and warm". David continues, "May 1st we left for Winter Quarters stopping awhile at Mosquito Creek arriving at the place of our destination about the first of June"(13).

"With the first companies of families we started for the valleys traveling in Bro. P.P. Pratt's company, arriving at Salt Lake City, Sept 24, 1847", David indicates. His wife Mary A. adds detail, "David found a man who needed a teamster, so we got a chance to go with him. My husband was to do the night herding, yoke up the cattle and hook up the teams. I was to do the cooking, dish washing, unpacking and packing up again. We were to bring our own bedding. The two little ones were to ride, but instead after we got some distance out I was compelled to walk and carry my baby and the little girl (Amanda Polly), ten years old, trudged along at my side. This man later apostatized from the Church and went to California."

They then traveled in the Daniel Spencer/Perrigrine Sessions Company. It had 1185 individuals and 75 wagons were in the company when it began its journey from the outfitting post on the Elkhorn River about 27 miles west of Winter Quarters, Nebraska. They departed 18 June and were 3 months on the way, arriving in Salt Lake City, September 24th, 1847.

The old Oddie Fort was commenced, but no houses were as yet finished. Mary Abigail said, "But to us it looked good and we felt that we had gained a resting place where we would be free from mobs and persecution for awhile at least. Our provisions were scarce and during the winter we had to subsist on anything to sustain life. Even the hides of oxen were used, the hair was scraped off and we boiled a little piece for our. When an oxen was killed every bit of the carcass was eaten and we

used weeds and thistles, roots, anything we could find that was edible."

Like many others they had planted a crop the following spring and hoped soon to have plenty. Mary Abigail writes, "Our hopes were again banished for with sad hearts we saw the great army of crickets swarming down to destroy our much needed crops. But the Lord was on our side. He had not brought us there to starve, and he sent the Gulls to destroy the crickets. How beautiful they looked with their white wings as they came down and destroyed the crickets, and we felt the hand of the Lord was over us, and we felt to thank His holy name and to rejoice in all these dark days we were going through. We thought we would be left to starve. We dug segos and picked thistle greens and cooked them without meat or vinegar and all in all we were happy because we had gained our freedom and never once was sorry we had left our homes for the Gospel's sake."

They remained in the city about two years and their fourth child, David William, was born July 11th 1849. In the fall of 1850, they moved to Lehi and were one of the first families there. David was chosen second counselor to the first bishop of Lehi (Bishop David Evans). They remained there three years and a fifth child, Sarah Maranda, was born on April 24th, 1851 and Ellen Maria was born in March of 1854 in Salt Lake City.

David's daughter Amanda Polly Savage worked in Salt Lake City for some prominent families and at the age of seventeen was married on 23, December 1854 to Phineas Wolcott Cook as his second wife.

David wrote, "In the fall following being called I moved to Cedar and labored through the winter upon the tithing office. In the winter of 1855 I managed a pack train of mules carrying provisions for a man by the name of Leach down on the Muddy and Clara (rivers) of whom I took a contract to carry the mail to California, making a trip from San Bernardino to Salt Lake City once every two months". It was a very dangerous ride as he had to cross a long desert without water and pass among hostile Indians. Yet he was always preserved from danger and death. "The Indians were very hostile and it was thought to be as much a man's life was worth to go through that region of the country but I escaped unharmed. This contract lasted about 8 months. After which I made several trips to California freighting till

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1857. I was called to take charge of a company to go to San Bernardino to aid the saints to move to the valleys, meeting many difficulties, hardships and loss returning to Holden in April.” He also brought back a load of grape cuttings.

Under the date of July 30, 1854 Thomas D. Brown records in the Journal of the Southern Indian mission, the arrival at Cedar City, Utah of the mail from Salt Lake City to California. Each mail carrier rode one horse and had an additional one for his mail and necessities, and rode the full distance and back monthly. For example, at Las Vegas, August 13, 1855, David Savage arrived with the mail from California” and on Sept 14, following he returns with the mail from Salt Lake City.

The new Church settlement at Las Vegas, Nevada was led by President William Bringham. These people had a most difficult time trying to start crops in the alkali soil and intense heat. Under these discouraging times mail was most appreciated as stated in a letter from John Steel to Apostle George A. Smith. “According to your request I take up my pen and first acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated August 28 1855; by the hand of Brother Savage, the mail carrier. I should here say some word in favor of the mail carriers, Messrs. Savage, Hope, and Conger, who have accommodated us very much in bringing us letters and parcels for which I, as an individual, in connection with the rest of my brethren, tender my warmest thanks and best wishes for their future welfare.”

David must have made every effort to keep active in his church assignments while on the mail runs as the entry of Sunday January 14, 1855 indicates he was one of two Seventies who spoke at a church meeting at Harmony, Utah. He also was a speaker at the same church on March 18, 1855.

In about 1855, David and Brothers Samuel D. and Joel W. White and several others were called to go to Iron County, Cedar City to strengthen the settlement because of problems with the Indians. They were there three years, and then moved to Cedar Springs. It was a new settlement in Millard County with only ten families and a fort to protect themselves from the Indians.

In 1856, he was called to go to Salt Lake City to bring down some of the hand cart company who were nearly frozen to death. He and Brother Gildon, each drove a

mule team. They had a very cold and tedious trip, the snow being very deep. He arrived home on the 14th of Dec. and three days later their seventh child, Ann Eliza, was born. David was home for two weeks, rested up and then fitted himself to go to San Bernardino with Brothers Rich and Lyman to help bring a few Saints who were called back. Johnston’s Army was approaching Utah, which caused the church Authorities to advise all of the members from the outlying settlements to return to the safety of the mountain valleys. President Brigham Young sent freighter to assist the families to return and David was one of them. He was gone five months and helped some families in and also brought a load of goods.

In the group he helped bring back was Mary Ward Heap. Her husband and sister wife decided to remain in San Bernardino. With hard work and dedication they were prospering. With prosperity though, Mary began to feel uneasy and worried about her children falling from the Gospel for which she had traveled half-way around the world. So she determined to return to Parowan even though she was expecting again. The journey of the traveling group must have been one of most difficulty, with Mary in her condition riding a jostling wagon across the desert during July and August, the hottest part of the year. Three weeks after Mary and her family returned to the shelter of her Church, and her mother and brother, she gave birth to twin boys on 20 Aug 1857 at Parowan, Utah.

In Parowan, Iron County on April 2 1858, David married Mary Ward Heap in the order of polygamy. She was a widow with four children. Her husband had apostatized and went to California (this is from a second account). His second wife, Mary Abigail said, “She lived in with me and we lived happy together although we both had families of little children by different fathers. She was a good peaceable woman. After two years we moved to Cedar Valley, Utah Co. David and Mary Ward’s first baby, Isabella was born October 28th , 1859 in Holden, Millard County.”

In 1860 he was called by Brother Charles C. Rich, to go across the plains with his team and help Brother Joseph E. Rich and Francis M. Lyman and their sons. They had been called on a mission to England. He went with two or three mule teams and took the brethren

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safe through, and brought three poor families back and a threshing machine.

Later that year, October of 1860, he married his fourth wife, 22 year old Margaret Evans Jones in Salt Lake City. She had her first child, Margaret Emma in July of 1861 in Springville. At that time the family was living at Cedar Springs, now called Holden. In June of 1861, Mary Abigail's eighth child, Agnes Belzora, was born. Before they left Holden, Mary Ward bore him a son, Edward David, on December 28th, 1862. In 1863 two children were born into the family. Margaret's child, Laura Angeline, was born November 4th in Salt Lake City and William Albert on November 29th in Preston, Idaho to Mary Ward. A year later, Charles Thomas was born to Margaret in December of 1864 in Paris, Idaho.

In the fall of 1863 David was called upon by Apostle Charles C. Rich, to go with him to Bear Lake to form a new settlement. It was a very cold hard country and was fraught with hardships and trials. There was a very high mountain to climb and all of the provisions had to be hauled over by team. There were twenty in the family, three families of our own. We took an old man and his wife along named Miles and a nephew, Sydney Savage. This was a hard move on us as we lost nearly all of our stock and sheep, and some of our mules in the hard winter and deep snow. Those that did not die we had to trade off for hard stuff, and here my husband's health began to fail him. The strain was so great both on body and mind. It was so cold and frosty that our crops did not mature the first year. It was so hard indeed to get along with such a large family and live in Paris. Lucy Estella, Mary Abigail's last child was born Dec. 8th, 1865 in Paris, Idaho. While living there, Gomer Jones was born in December of 1867 to his wife Margaret.

After remaining in Bear Lake about three years they moved back to Holden as the times were so hard and David's health was so poor. Some of their old friends were very anxious for them to come back. On December 31, 1868 in Hyrum, Utah Mary Ward bore another son, Parley Franklin. Barbara Alice was born in August of 1872, in Holden to his wife Mary Ward.

In 1873, David was called on a mission to the New England states and Canada and was gone for thirteen months. He visited his relatives and gathered up all the genealogy he could. In Boston he found Thomas Sav-

age who sailed from London on the Planter in the year 1635. Thomas settled in Boston, married Faith Hutchinson and they had 7 children. (Church records indicate that David's father is Roger and Roger's father is William – not Thomas. It is not known if David, writing at this time gave the only information he had or if he was referring to a few generations back).

In the fall of 1877, they moved from Holden to a place on the Sevier River called Kingston. This was where the King family had started a United Order. It was quite well for awhile, until President Thomas R. King died. After that things seemed to go wrong, and it soon broke up. David married a widow, Susannah Jacaway in St. George on February 9, 1878. Of her 7 children, four of them were probably still with her, the youngest about five years old.

In December 1880, they left Kingston and started for Arizona, to Snowflake for the present. Then David with part of the family moved to Salt River, and lived there a few years. His wife Mary Ward died in October of 1883, in Kingston, at the age of 53. Later, David returned to Snowflake and remained there until his death.

On April 26, 1886 David died after an illness of two months of asthma, being nearly 76 years old. He died firm in the faith of the gospel. He was always kind and liberal. He left three wives and was the father of nineteen children, seventeen of whom at that time were living and all were married and had families.

Information for this history came from:

“David Leonard Savage: His Beginnings” by David W. Savage, May 1993, Austin, Texas

“David Leonard Savage and Mary Ward Heap Savage” by Earl Max Sudweeks, Ph.D., a Great Grandson (Revised 5-30-1991)

Mary Abigail White's Journal (David's second wife)

Before coming west David wrote a very short history that is recorded in the Biographies of the Second Quorum of Seventy, page 25. Located in LDS Church Archives, CR499 Roll #1

Notes on David's Roots:

David was born in Johnstown which is located in the eastern part of the Providence of Ontario, where Kings

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Highway No.2 turns to go to Ottawa, the Capitol of Canada. It is not far from Quebec. His father, Rogers Savage, was born 11, Oct. 1763 in Hartford, Connecticut. His mother, Phoebe Stephens, was born on 23, Oct. 1776 in Durham, Connecticut.

David Leonard Savage was born 25 July 1810 at Johnstown, Leeds County, Ontario, Canada to Roger Savage and Phoebe Stevens Savage, the fifth child of a family of nine children. John Savage, the third Great Grandfather of David was born in England in the year of 1627 and came to America as a young man where he married Elizabeth Dubbin (or Dublin) on 10 Feb 1652 at Hartford, Connecticut. The Savage family was among the first families to settle New England with many of the Savage families living in and around Middletown, Connecticut. Roger Savage was born in 1763 at Hartford, Connecticut, moved to Johnstown, Canada, apparently in sympathy to the British Crown, although he would have been too young to have fought in the Revolutionary War. The time he moved to Canada is not certain as some families remained in the United States all through the Revolution even though they were amenable to the British cause. The people who were loyal to the British Crown were organized into The United Empire Loyalists. For their support to the Crown they were given land grants in Leeds and Grenville Counties of Ontario, near the town of Brockville.

Conditions of the people in 1783 are described by Ruth McKenzie, "Loyalist refugees and disbanded soldiers with their families had gathered in large numbers at Montreal, Sorel and other centers throughout Quebec during the American Revolutionary War, which was now over. Where were these homeless people to go? At that time the province of Ontario was nonexistence. Some Loyalist had gone from American colonies to Niagara, but the vast region between Niagara and Montreal was hardly known except by Indians, a few explorers and fur traders, and some of the early French soldiers and sailors." (10)

Following exploration and survey work, settlement got under way in 1784 in Ontario. Roger Savage made application for Lot 3, Concession 7 in Leeds Township as follows:

His Excellency Peter Hunter, Esquire, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Upper Canada ... For Coun-

cil. The Petition of Roger Savage. Humbly Sheweth that your petition having a wish to enjoy the privileges of a British Subject moved his family and property into this Province last winter purposely to become a settler, humbly solicits your Excellency in council for such a quantum of land agreeable to the new Regulation as your great knowledge, goodness & wisdom may dictate. And -in Duty Bound will Even Pray. Elizabethtown July 17, 1800 c.o. Rogers Savage.

This may certify that Roger Savage the signer of this Petition is the Person he describes himself to be- he has brought Property for same amount into this Province & bean the character of an honest industrious man & I conceive him to be richly entitled to such indulgences as Government may be pleased to bestow upon him, he has taken the oath prescribed by law. Alex Campbell Jr

On the back of the petition is written 28 Roger Savage Petition 110, of Elizabethtown County of Leeds & District of Johnston 1800, B.R., not allowed, LSJ Stanley

These land grams were assigned by drawing lots for them and the one drawn by Roger Savage proved to be in a swamp so this may have been the reason why it was denied. No other record has been found at this time that ties the Savage family to a given piece of property in the area but Roger married Phoebe Stevens in Canada October 23, 1800, shortly after making application for the land grant.

David Leonard Savage was born in the Johnstown area in 1810, as were the rest of his brothers and sisters. Recent information shows that Morris, the oldest child of the family died in 1819 and is buried in the Baptist Cemetery at Seeley, Ontario."

From: "DAVID LEONARD SAVAGE AND MARY WARD HEAP SAVAGE", By Earl Max Sudweeks, Ph.D., a Great Grandson (Revised 5-30-91)

Reference:

David Leonard Savage – FamilySearch.org
13926147

David Leonard Savage Indian Peacekeeper

INDIAN PEACEKEEPER

One evening while Johnson's Army was at Camp Floyd a small company of soldiers were riding in the foot hills of Cedar Fort when they came suddenly upon a few Indians while they were eating their evening meal. Unwisely they fired into their midst killing one Indian. An Indian witnessed the act, he shot an arrow at the soldiers and ran for a horse. In twenty minutes, he was decked out in war paint and feathers and riding through Cedar Fort giving his terrifying war cries and soon the mountains rang with the death call of these desperate people.

They were on the war path for sure, assembling their forces they hid in a ravine near Lehi. When the stage coach passed the driver and all the passengers were massacred. At Cedar Fort anxious moments followed the men keeping close watch for the Indians. Finally, they were seen advancing to the attack. Wishing to avoid bloodshed, some men went to see them under a flag of truce but were rebuked by the redskins.

Then my grandfather who had heard of the trouble while in route with his freight had gone to see if he could help his friends and he said, "I am sure if I go out alone I can make peace." Against protest, he gave his gun to his companions in sight of the Indians and holding his arms high as the friendship signal went calmly forth to meet them.

There seemed to be no relenting on the part of the Indians. They met my grandfather with spears raised and arrows drawn. He spoke to them in their own language with coolness and great dignity. He told them the Mormons were their friends and had nothing to do with the ones who had offended them and that the great spirits would be displeased with them if they killed their white brothers. Finally spears were lowered and arrows sheathed and the Indians dispersed.

Grandfather's daughter, Amanda Polly, also knew the Ute and Paiute languages. When the Indians would come and they would have trouble making them understand they would ask for Savage's Papoose, meaning Amanda, who had no trouble conversing with them.

David Savage was a great friend to the Indians. He learned to speak their language fluently, which came in handy many times.

A FEW INCIDENTS OF EARLY HISTORY:

The Mormons had become such dear friends of the Indians that they did not want to kill any of them and would often look to see if garments (knowing them to belong to Mormons) were there before they would harm white people. If they were not the Indians would kill.

There were many trains fired on as they journeyed to California by the Indians. Grandfather Savage's services were in great demand as a protection to them. A company would often wait weeks. On one occasion a rich company came through going to California about the year 1851 or 1852. They stopped and asked Brigham Young what they could do to be safe from the Indians. He told them he could fix it so they would be perfectly safe until they got to Cedar City. He said he would send a letter to David Savage at the above place who was a great Indian Scout and much loved by them and that David Savage would see them safely through. The country they were passing through was hostile.

They arrived in Cedar City safely and delivered the letter from Pres. Young. David Savage went with them through the Indian country, riding a mule along by the side of the wagons so the Indians could see him. The first night they camped in Indian territory, the people with him were very much frightened to see such numbers of Indians coming toward them. They had recognized their friend, Savage, and had come to greet him. The word would be sent along the line by Indian runners to tell the Indians their friend was coming. He was met at every stop by bands of Indians who came to see him. The captain of the train asked grandfather what they would do with the horses to keep the Indians from stealing them. Grandfather told him, "We will just let the Indians take them and herd them and they will bring them back all right." The Captain said, "Oh, if we do that we will never see them again." But Grandfather said that an Indian never breaks his word. The Indians took the horses all away. Grandfather told them to bring them back just at sunrise, which they did to the surprise of the Captain and all the company.

Source:

Utah Pioneers

Savage, David Leonard: Indian Peacekeeper

<https://utahpioneers.org/2020/12/savage-indian-peacekeeper>