

HENRY¹ OF HINGHAM

Ninth Generation

No. 67

NAME: John Wilbert⁹ Chamberlin “Jack”

Father: Joseph⁸ Chamberlin (No. 59)
[James Woodmansee⁷ (Thomas⁶, James⁵, William⁴⁻³, John², Henry¹)
and Rebecca (Rulon) Chamberlin]

Mother: Amy Wilbert

Born: 4 May 1841, Forked River, Monmouth Co., NJ

Died: 22 Nov 1891, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT

Buried: 24 Nov 1891, City Cemetery, Salt Lake City, UT

Married: (1) Helen Ramsay, 30 Sep 1865, Salt Lake City, UT

Other Marriages: (2) Elizabeth Smart, 2 Feb 1879, Salt Lake City, UT

No. 11701

SPOUSE (1): Helen Ramsay “Nell/Nellie”

Father: William Smith Ramsay

Mother: Mary McPherson Cameron

Born: 20 July 1847, London, Middlesex Co., England

Died: 3 July 1877, Salt Lake City, UT

Buried: July 1877, City Cemetery, Salt Lake City, UT

Other Marriages:

CHILDREN

(By First Marriage)

- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| M | 78 | John William ¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 20 Nov 1866, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. Unmarried. Died 15 Apr 1940, probably Salt Lake City, UT. + |
| M | 79 | Joseph Ramsay ¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 4 Feb 1869, West Point, Pahute Co., AZ (now near the town of Logandale, Clark Co., Nevada). Married (1) Myra Elizabeth Weight, 31 Aug 1891, Salt Lake City, UT (widowed); (2) Cora Winkless, 25 Dec 1906, Salt Lake City, UT. Died 11 Dec 1936, Salt Lake City, UT. + |
| F | 80 | Nell (or Nellie) ¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 28 Aug 1871, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. Married (1) Charles Arthur Nichols, 5 Mar 1890, Salt Lake City, UT (divorced); (2) Moroni Harold McAllister, 3 July 1906, Los Angeles, CA. Died 11 Mar 1932, Los Angeles, CA. + |
| F | 81 | Georgina ¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 21 Oct 1875, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. Died there 8 Nov 1875. Buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery, Plat A, Block 8, Lot 10; Interment No. 7041, Deed 393. |

No. 11702

SPOUSE (2): Elizabeth Smart “Lizzie”

Father: Thomas Henry Smart

Mother: Sarah Ann Morgan

Born: 21 Sep 1859, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT

Died: 2 May 1908, Salt Lake City, UT

Buried: 5 May 1908, City Cemetery, Salt Lake City, UT

Other Marriages: (2) James H. Johnston, 12 Jan 1906, Salt Lake City, UT

CHILDREN

(By Second Marriage)

- M 82 Bertrand Leon¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 19 Nov 1879, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. He and his cousin, Ralph Vary¹⁰ Chamberlin, were close friends being close to the same age. Ralph referred to himself and Bert as “chums.” Bert died of pneumonia, 10 Feb 1896, Salt Lake city, UT, and was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery, Plat J, Block 5, Lot 2. His headstone reads: “Bertie L. Chamberlin, Born November 19, 1879, Died February 10, 1896.”
- F 83 Frances Eva¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 16 Jan 1882, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. Died there 20 May 1886. Buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery, Plat J, Block 5, Lot 2. Her headstone reads: “Frances E. Chamberlin, Born January 16, 1882, Died May 20, 1886.”
- F 84 Hazel Kirk¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 21 Jan 1884, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. Died there 10 July 1887. Buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery, Plat J, Block 5, Lot 2. Her headstone reads: “Hazel K. Chamberlin, Born January 21, 1884, Died July 10, 1887.”
- M 85 Denton Benedict¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 3 Nov 1886, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. Married Martha Leone Coleman, 15 Aug 1908, Salt Lake City, UT. Died 16 Nov 1968, Salt Lake City, UT. +
- M 86 Earl Cecil¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 17 Mar 1889, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. Died there 15 June 1904. Buried 17 June 1904, Salt Lake City Cemetery, Plat J, Block 5, Lot 2. His headstone reads: “Earl C. Chamberlin, Born March 17, 1889, Died June 15, 1904.”
- M 87 Stanley Smart¹⁰ Chamberlin, b. 21 Aug 1891, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., UT. Died there 11 Apr 1892. Buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery, Plat J, Block 5, Lot 2. His headstone reads: “Stanley S. Chamberlin, Born August 21, 1891, Died April 11, 1892.”

BIOGRAPHICAL

On 7 May 1864, John purchased “two hundred feet” of the Panacker Silver mine located in Meadow Valley, Washington County, UT (Recorded in Meadow Valley Record Book A, P. 18, Claim No. 25 southward “from discovery claim.”

Helen's obituary appeared in *The Deseret News*, Wednesday, September 5, 1877, P. 3:

Died - in this city, September 3, 1877, of disease of the lungs. Helen, wife of John W. Chamberlin, aged 30 years. Millennial Star please copy.

It is presumed that Helen is buried near her husband but there is no gravestone.

John Wilbert⁹ Chamberlin (No. 67) – Continued

On 21 August 1891, John signed a Promissory Note to pay \$50 interest on a note of \$2,500, held by the Utah Title Insurance & Trust Company. The note is marked "Paid Dec 8, 1892."

John died intestate and his brother, William Henry Chamberlin, was appointed Administrator of his estate on 22 July 1892, by Causten Browne Jr., Deputy of the Probate Court of Salt Lake County (Recorded in Book 1, P. 460). Apparently his widow Elizabeth declined to administer her husband's estate.

John's obituary appeared in *The Deseret News*, Sunday, November 23, 1891:

Chamberlin, in the fifteenth Ward, this city. John W. Chamberlin, November 22, 1891, of brain trouble. Son of Joseph and Emma Chamberlin, born in New Jersey, May 4, 1841. Funeral on Tuesday, November 24, 1 o'clock p.m. From his late residence, 215 South Fourth West Street. Friends are respectfully invited to attend.

John is buried in Plat J, Block 5, Lot 2, in his family plot located on the north side of Grand Avenue, about midway between Center and Cypress streets in the Salt Lake City Cemetery. His headstone reads: "John W. Chamberlin, Born May 4, 1841, Died November 22, 1891."

Elizabeth is buried near John (her first husband) and her headstone reads: "Elizabeth Chamberlin Johnston, nee Smart, Born September 21, 1859, Died May 2, 1908."

The following account was prepared by Mrs. Audrey Arthur, granddaughter of John Wilbert Chamberlin:

"To write a history of person you have loved and known well is a difficult task, but to write of someone you have not known at all is almost impossible. Not only did I not know my great grandfather, but he died even before any of his grandchildren were born. At this point in time, I perhaps know more about him and his wife than anyone else; so I feel it is important to put in words what little I do know. There is of necessity some disconnected facts and great gaps of time about which I know nothing of his life.

Along with his parents and two brothers and three sisters, John Wilbert Chamberlin, at age 12, crossed the great plains of the United States to build a new life in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. This was not an unusual happening as many of his contemporaries went through the same hardships with the same spirit to achieve the same end. As new Mormon converts, the Chamberlins were called by God, through His prophet, to build up an earthly kingdom in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Hopefully, these pioneers would also find peace from their tormentors and a good place to rear their children among those who believe as they did.

They were a family of reasonably good means having sold their farming property which was near the shores of Forked River, Ocean County, New Jersey. John was born at the family home in Forked River, on the 4th day of May 1841. His roots were deep in the New Jersey soil, as progenitors on both sides of his family, Chamberlins and Giffords, had lived in that area since the early 1680s. Even before that they had come from England to Massachusetts. They were honest, hardworking people, well thought of in the community. Their new religion caused some rifts in close family ties as often happened to new Mormon converts, a fact we learn from inuendoes written in letters from New Jersey cousins. Later, these were somewhat bridged when John's nephew, James Francis (Frank) Chamberlin, filled a mission to the Eastern States and met some of his relatives who welcomed him. Letters between these families have given clues to genealogical research in the past years.

John's parents, Joseph and Amy (Wilbert) Chamberlin, made their home in the old Fifteenth Ward in Salt Lake City for many years, living first in a two-room log cabin located on Fourth West, First South and South Temple. The cabin was later replaced by a brick home.

As John and his brothers married, they too lived in the same ward on the same block. John's name is listed as a Teacher and was faithful in his block teaching duties as is found in the Teacher's Quorum minutes of the Fifteenth Ward.¹ His father was an elder.

A pretty brown-eyed, dark-haired girl, Helen Cameron Ramsay became John's wife in the Endowment House on September 30, 1865. They lived in the Fifteenth Ward at 215 South 4th West for about three years. During this time, their first child, John William Chamberlin, was born on the 20th day of November, 1866. This son never married and lived in Salt Lake, and was known to me as Uncle Jack.

During the General Conference of the Church on the 8th of October, 1868, John's name was read as the thirteenth of 128 men who were called with their families on a settling mission to the Muddy River Mission. He answered the call and moved his wife and young son to the Upper Muddy Valley.

This was in true desert country in Pahute County, Territory of Arizona. Helen and John lived in a dugout at the "West Point" settlement on one of three lots that they had bought.

The Upper Muddy Valley which is two miles wide and five miles long is in the southeastern tip of Nevada about 90 miles south and a few miles west of St. George, Utah. A river fed by clear warm springs gathers sediment and alkali which gives it the name, "The Muddy River." There are some historians who claim that it received its name from a Mesquite bean "moudy." This valley is truly an oasis in the desert surrounded by mesas and flanked on three sides by beautiful red earth mountains. This valley has been known to travelers along the old Spanish Trail. When news of the area came from members of the Las Vegas Mission to Brigham Young he soon had a company of 183 colonist emigrants on the way to settle on the Muddy River. The first 15 colonists arrived on January 8, 1869, and settled the Lower Muddy River Valley; by May, the remainder of the colonists arrived.²

This was an ideal place to grow cotton being warmer than in St. George. Here the saints could grow and manufacture cloth more quickly than bringing the finished product across the plains from the east.

From pioneer diaries and letters of these first settlers, it is learned there were several settlements on the river; St. Thomas, Overton, Mill Point (name changed to St. Joseph), Simonsville, and finally West Point. Family legend tells us that because of threatened Indian trouble, my great-grandfather took his wife (Helen) away from West Point temporarily and their second son was born in a covered wagon while on the way to "St. George." This baby was my grandfather Joseph Ramsay Chamberlin. St. George was over 90 miles away and in those days it was a three-week journey because of the terrain and necessity of crossing the Virgin River some 35 times. Thus, it seems more likely that John was headed for the neighboring settlement of St. Joseph on the Muddy River which was only about 20 miles from his home. Joseph R. Chamberlin was the informant on the birth certificate of his youngest daughter in which he states he was born in Arizona. The Muddy settlements were at that time in Pahute Co., Territory of Arizona, and St. George was in the Territory of Utah.

¹ Fifteenth Ward Records: Teacher's Quorum Minutes

² "Settlements on the Muddy," by L.A. Fleming, *Utah Historical Society Quarterly*, Spring, 1967

The following are excerpts from letters by Helen and John when they were living at West Point, written to his brother William Henry and wife Frances, who lived in Salt Lake City.

West Point, March 6th, 1869

“ . . . Injuns killed a calf the other day. We tied ‘em up and blacksnaked ‘em. I guess they will know better next time. Made them sing Ki hi, Ki hi. They have ben good as little pigs since.

Hant got any meat down here but got 2 little pigs. Have meat after a little [while?]. Getting my lot pretty well fenced. Got a willow Wickeup made. Going to plant gourds in a few days. That is what Jonah shaded with. Nellie says kiss Frances for me and says she must write to her.

How is the weather & how is times in general? Times is lively here but no money in it. Potatoes stands at 4 & 5 dollars, Wheat 3.50 to 4.00 for bushel, sweet potatoes, 50 cents per lb, ‘lasses, 5.00 per gallon. Whiskey is plaid out. Beef and pork has gone up. Butter plaid out & all other things in proportion.”

Jack

West Point - April 3, 1869

“ . . . Frances you said in your letter if this little Josey was as nice a boy as Johnny is you would think so. Frances if you [could] seem him, he was born on the fourth of February about six o'clock in the morning and wade nine and a half pounds. Johnny sends his love to Frances and now would like to go on the house again. He does not forget you yet he is as fat as a pig. You would hardly know him now for he as grown so much . . .

There has been a death here. A woman about 51 years old and she is the first death hear. She was buried up in the mountains. Frances this is the finest winter I ever say - it is so very hot days and cold nights. The gardens look fine. The pease are up, the radishes are up, the onions, and the potatoes and all the garden stuff is up so you see we are ahead of you hear. Give my love to Henry and tell him to bring you down to see us. Frances I must bring my letter to a close as Johnny has got a very sorry finger and is crying for me to take him. Give my love to your Mother and grandmother and all inquiring Friends and keep a share for yourself from your fond Affec. sister.”

Helen Chamberlin

West Point, April 7, 1869

“ . . . there is no Flannel nor Cradles here. Have nothing of the kind. Nellie has to use the big rocking chair for a cradle for our little boy.”

John

West Point, August 29, 1869

Dear Sister Frances,

We received your kind and welcom letter a few days ago was glad to hear from you. We are all well at present with the excetions [exceptions] of a cold and sore eyes but I hope these few lines will find you injoying the blessings of good health. I was glad to hear that Ally's baby has got well again and that all the children was all well and was glad to hear from you that Mary was well and Mother. Dear Frances if you will be so kind as to see Mary or Mother and tell them to write to me for I have heard that my Mother's house has been on fire and burnt all of her things up and I do not know what to do for it makes me sick to think about it and do want to know how it happened and wether anyone was hurt and what Mother is going to do. Oh hon I wish I could cum and see you all again. The gardens are looking fine. We have pleanty of Water melons and musk melons and cucumbers and beans and corn.

Frances I wish you were down hear for we have three city lots and dugout and all together so you see we should be company for one another. Give my love to Ally and Jim and Becca and John Addams and to your Mother and granmother and all the rest. Frances I must bring my letter to a close for the mail is ready to start. Johnny says for Harry to kiss Frances for him and Joseph. Please to excuse this scribble for my eyes are so sore and do not think you can read it but I will [write] more when my eyes get better. Give my love to Harry and keep a good shere for yourself.

From your loving sister,

Helen Chamberlin

West Point, Sept 5th 1868*

“ . . . I have been making adobies for the last week, not very nice ones at that . . .

Well, Harry we are geting along fine. Have plenty of green corn & beans, sweet potatoes & other vegetables with a little milk and butter. Meat is like hens teeth, rather scarce. It hasn't [been] so warm as it was a month ago . . . I shall send up some sweet potatoes if I get a chance to the folks.

I would love to see you all. . . .

J.W. Chamberlin

* The year this letter is dated should be 1869, since Henry and Frances were not married until March 1869 and this letter speaks to them both.

Though this pioneer life was difficult, the tone of their letters does indicate discouragement. Many of the families called did not stay in the Mission. “In the spring of 1868, the Saints who located in the Upper Muddy at a place called West Point, organized a branch of the Church with Andrew S. Gibbons, as Presiding Elder. In December 1868, it was reorganized, a townsite surveyed and George Leavitt was appointed Presiding Elder. At that time, the branch consisted of 25 families.¹

Another writer said “Twenty families were located in West Point and they willingly subscribed \$400 in capital stock in the cotton factory. They had a good crop of cotton as they had not suffered a water shortage, nor had it been necessary for them to dig long ditches to bring water to their cultivated acres. The river banks were low and the cotton farmers simply cut through the sand to bring moisture to their crops.”² In the Lower Muddy (St. Joseph, St. Thomas and Simonsville) it was not as easy.

“The year of 1869 was known as the year of the drought, great efforts were made to construct more canals and ditches in an effort to utilize the available water to greater advantage,” according to Joseph Young. “Just think of it — three miles of canal, large enough to float a canal boat made by 70 men in five days.” Later, to the Deseret News (Vol. 18:204), “Who dares to say the men on the Muddy can't do anything.”³

Timber was not readily available, the closest located over 60 miles away. The adaptable pioneers made “dugouts” for homes to ward off the relentless sun and wind until the business of making permanent adobe homes could be accomplished. For lack of wood, roofs were made from rushes and tules that grew along the mushy swamps. Some families used tents and wagon boxes for homes. Straw mats were woven and laid on the clay earth for floors.

¹ Manuscript Histories, CR Vol. 10116 (West Point, later called Moapa)

² *History of the Cotton Mission and Cotton Culture*, by Ivan Barratt, Master's Thesis, Utah Historical Society

³ *A History of the Muddy Mission*, by Peason Star Corbett, Utah Historical Society

Indians were troublesome as they would drive off cattle and horses at every opportunity. Brother Erastus Snow advised the Saints to good to the Indians, to “Shoot them with biscuits.” They would steal anything they could and then try to trade the items back to the settlers for food.

Fuel was difficult to find. Roots were dug out of the ground and dried for fuel. Always there was the wind, hot in summer and cold in winter, and always it carried drifting sand that got in food, in cracks in the houses and sometimes filled up their water ditches.

One pioneer woman told her relatives in a letter that everything that grew had thorns and made it impossible to keep clothes mended.

The greatest problem was not food as they had adequate quantities from successful gardens, but there were no markets for their produce. They were destitute for clothing, shoes, hoes, spades, shovels, and plows. The brethren were very anxious to sell the crop of cotton for these other necessities, even at a lower price if necessary.

“The redeeming quality of the country was the excellent growing season, a newly-planted tree would grow as large in one season as it would in three seasons in Salt Lake. Beets, onions, squash, melons, grapes, and wheat were easily grown. Settlers had food but no money as there were no close markets for their produce. The group of 25 families that remained at West Point were described as being progressive, they were diligently at work; building homes and helping themselves and each other. If any were discouraged they didn't show it. It was estimated that there was over 100,000 pounds of “White Gold” (cotton) harvested in the fall of 1869.”¹

There was little time to write journals or keep records as the people were so overworked, and much of their history has been pieced together many years after it actually happened. Theirs was a dedicated spirit and families learned to suffer together and pray together in order conquer the desert and lonely isolation.

The Chamberlins apparently stayed in the Upper Muddy Valley for over two years.

Violent thunderstorms usually came during the months of August and September which could literally pour out rivers of water. James G. Bleak, secretary of the Southern Utah Mission, records a letter to the saints from Erastus Snow and Joseph W. Young, which read in part: “We sympathized with the brethren at West Point on account of the disastrous floods that have injured their crops and bred disease in the settlement.

After conferring with Pres. Young on the subject, we are authorized to say to the brethren of that settlement, that if they prefer to vacate that place, they are at liberty to do so and seek locations at St. Thomas, Overton, or St. Joseph or anywhere else they may choose among the saints.”²

Not only did the elements hinder progress but political storms were responsible for the collapse of other settlements along the Muddy River. Although the Mormons were allowed to pay taxes to Utah Territory in produce, when this area became a part of the State of Nevada, the required payment was to be in United States gold and silver coin. In one case, officials tried to collect taxes at gunpoint.

¹ *One Hundred Years on the Muddy*, by Arabell Lee Hafner, Art City Publishing Co., 1967

² “Settlements on the Muddy, 1865 to 1871,” by L.A. Fleming, *Utah Historical Society Quarterly*, April 1976, P. 14

A final survey line was run in August of 1870, officially placing the settlements on the Muddy in Lincoln County, Nevada. This double tax burden prompted Brigham Young to write the following letter to leaders on the Muddy:

‘You have done a noble work in making and sustaining that outpost of Zion against many difficulties, amid exposure and toil. We now advise you that you gather together and take into consideration your future course and if a majority, after fairly canvassing the subject, conclude to remain and continue to develop the resources which abound with you, all abide by the result. But if the majority of the Saints in council determine that it is better to leave the state whose laws and burdens are so oppressive, let it be so done; but it will not be prudent to reduce your numerical strength much and attempt to remain.

May the blessing of Israel's God rest upon you and guide you in your decision.

It would be advisable, whether you conclude to leave the state or not, to petition the Legislature for an abatement of all back taxes, setting forth the disadvantages under which you labor, being an entirely agricultural instead of mining people, and far removed from market’

It is not known exactly when the Chamberlins left the settlement, whether it was soon after the devastating floods or if they waited until after the vote was taken in December 1870, when most of the families left with the exception of three families who remained. John and Helen returned to their former home and ward in Salt Lake City, close to the families they loved.

John spent some time in the salt business and in the mining business, with his father and brothers. He also had the J.W. Chamberlin Co. (a Real Estate Broker) and owned the Star Nursery which was first located at Fourth West and Second South and later on State Street, between Fifth and Sixth South. In connection with the nursery, he also had some beehives.

On August 28, 1871, their first baby daughter was born and named Nellie. Four years later, on October 21, 1875, their second daughter was born. She was named Georgina, after Helen's sister who had died in London at the age of 23. Little Georgina lived about two and one-half weeks.

Helen's health was not good and she died of consumption when she was thirty years of age, leaving three children. About 13 months later, John married Elizabeth Smart, who had nursed Helen in her illness and became the housekeeper. By this time John was no longer active in the LDS church. He and Elizabeth had six children and all but one of these children died before the age of nineteen. John died of brain fever when he was 50 years old, on November 22, 1891.”

PREPARATION OF THIS RECORD

This record was prepared by the late David C. Chamberlin Sr., using data obtained from various sources as listed. Comments and additional information are welcome and should be sent to the World Chamberlain Genealogical Society. < www.chamberlain-society.org >

Email: CorrSec@chamberlain-society.org

Records compiled from personal interviews and letters (about 1920 to 1960) by Seth C. Chamberlin, 2401 Neffs Lane, Salt Lake City, UT

Family Bible of John Wilbert Chamberlin, in possession of Mrs. Ellen Smith, Salt Lake City, UT

Obituary of John Wilbert Chamberlin, *The Deseret News*, SLC, UT, 23 Nov 1891

Obituary of Helen Chamberlin, *The Deseret News*, SLC, UT, 5 Sep 1877, P. 3

Sexton's Records, Salt Lake City Cemetery, SLC, UT

Gravestone Incriptions, Salt Lake City Cemetery, SLC, UT

Biographical Notes prepared by Mrs. Audrey Arthur, 2120 Roosevelt Avenue, Salt Lake City, UT 84108

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