

Ebenezer Park Bryce 1830 by Sam Rhoton



Each year thousands of people from all around the world visit Bryce Canyon National Park in Bryce, Utah. If they go to the visitors center, they learn that Bryce Canyon was founded by and named after Ebenezer Bryce. What they don't know is that I am Ebenezer Bryce's Great, Great, Great, Great, Great Grandson and I have learned that he is famous for many more things he did.

Ebenezer was born in Dunblane, Perthshire Scotland on November 17, 1830 and was named after his Father's older brother, who died at a young age. Ebenezer was one of eight children, but only four lived to be adults.

At the age of ten, Ebenezer began working in the shipyards of Scotland. While working there, he became interested in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. His Father, family and friends did not share his interest for the Church. His Father would lock up Ebenezer's church clothes to keep him from going to church. In April of 1848, Ebenezer was baptized and decided he wanted to go to Utah. His Father followed him on board a ship to talk him out of going. His father took his hand and told him that if he would promise to be responsible for

his own sins, he could go. Ebenezer agreed and his Father left the ship. They never saw each other again.

After Ebenezer arrived in America, he worked as a carpenter in St. Louis Missouri. In March, 1850 he started traveling to the west with the James Pace Company. There were 100 wagons and two divisions. Many people died from sickness along the way. They arrived in Salt Lake City September 16, 1850 where he was re-baptized in the City Creek during winter.

On April 16, 1854, Ebenezer married Mary Ann Park and lived in Salt Lake City where he worked as a carpenter and a millwright. (A millwright was a person who designed and built equipment used in wood mills.) Mary Ann and Ebenezer were asked to move to Tooele to help build a saw mill. Their first of twelve children was born in Tooele. Shortly after, Ebenezer was asked to join the Tooele Top Battalion where he made a Private. His job was watch for the US Army in Echo Canyon above Ogden. One of his duties was to keep busy walking back and forth in front of the fires to make the US Army think they had many soldiers to fight against.

At the October LDS Conference in 1861, Ebenezer heard his name read along with others to go to Dixie in Southern Utah to help settle that area. When they arrived in what is now St. George, there were only seven tents. Then there were forty days of rain while they camped in their wagon with four young children and a baby.

Ebenezer and Sam Burgess were called to build a water powered saw mill in Pine Valley, 30 miles to the north of St. George. Seven years later, the Church asked them to move the saw mill to Mt. Turnbull on the north side of The Grand Canyon. They began to saw lumber for the St. George Temple.

It was about 1865 when Bishop William Snow asked him to design and be the builder for a chapel in Pine Valley. Ebenezer had not built any large buildings, but said "If you will let me built it like a ship, I'll build it". He was told to go ahead.

Ebenezer's wife Mary had poor health. In 1876 her Doctor advised her to move to a warmer climate. They moved their family to Garfield County. One day, Ebenezer and two sons were working to clean out a spring so they would have better water flow. Ebenezer decided to go up the canyon further and explore. He was gone a long time, and when he came back he son's asked him where he went. He told them about the canyon's shapes and colors and said, "Someday that will be a national park."

Ebenezer was a hard worker who was honest in his dealings. He lived a good life and left behind a strong legacy. He died September 26, 1913 in the community of Bryce. His funeral was in the Bryce church and he was buried next to his wife in the Bryce Cemetery in view of Bryce Mountain.