

# **JAMES H. GARDNER.**

## **Biography from the Lehi Centennial History**

One of the chief reasons why Utah has today so many men of initiative and ability to lead is that by force of circumstances they were early thrown on their own resources and compelled by an unkind fortune to develop that supremely valuable quality self-reliance. Responsibility is an effective teacher and the responsibility of shifting for one's self quickly brings into being any valuable attributes of character hitherto lurking under the surface.

When James Hamilton Gardner was born, on July 27, 1859, at Mill Creek, Salt Lake County, Utah, he was thrown into conditions which, while seemingly hard, were only those common to the times, and which have been so productive of the best types of Utah manhood.

His father, Archibald Gardner, a pioneer of 1847, and that time Bishop of the West Jordan Ward, was that kind of man Brigham Young liked to have around him a natural leader of men, resourceful, energetic, able to cope with new conditions, and a developer of new enterprises. His work left him little time to spend with his children, so that James H. was compelled to depend largely upon himself, living alternately with his mother, Sarah Hamilton Gardner, and his grandfather, James L. Hamilton.

Like most others of that period, he had little opportunity for education, his entire school life consisting of six winters in the grades. The rest of the time was spent working on the farm and, when he had reached young manhood, in the lumber camps.

In 1880, when James H. was 21 years old, he accepted a call for a mission to Hawaii. Here in the "garden spot of the world" he spent the next three and one-half years, and here it was also that perhaps the turning point of his life occurred.

Arriving on the island just when the sugar boiler on the church plantation was about to return home, he was assigned to work in the cane sugar mill, much to his regret then. While here he became a thorough master of the art of boiling sugar, although most of his time was spent in traveling among the natives.

In 1884 he returned to Utah and again took up his work on the farm, obtaining employment wherever possible. On October 15, 1886, he was married to Rhoda Priscilla Huffaker. From this union have come nine children, four boys and five girls.

Shortly after their marriage, James H. and his wife decided to take advantage of the available government lands in Idaho, so leaving their old home in Utah, they homesteaded a quarter section of land at Willow Creek (now Elva), near Idaho Falls. The struggle to subdue this new country was a severe one, requiring to its fullest the pioneer spirit of perseverance and determination. He had no more than brought the land into some stage of cultivation than other events occurred which altered the course of his life completely.

In 1890 the Lehi sugar factory was built and immediately there arose the necessity of obtaining workmen to run it, and especially men of some experience in the industry. Among other applications received was one from James H. Gardner of Idaho, who stated that he had previously boiled sugar in Hawaii.

He was at once told to report at Lehi, a summons which he gladly followed, and during the first campaign was one of the sugar boilers. In 1892 he moved his family to Lehi, where they have since resided.

From its beginning until the present, James H. Gardner has been a faithful employee of the Utah Sugar Company. After the first campaign, he was made night foreman and, in a few years, general foreman. Finally, when Hy A. Vallez resigned from the position, he was designated superintendent of the Lehi factory.

Since that time he has received still another promotion, having been made General Consulting Superintendent. He still holds this position and in addition is a member of the Technical Board which controls the operation of the plants. His record as a sugar maker is an enviable one. His long experience, his ability to handle men, his excellent judgment have won him not only the confidence 'of the sugar company which employs him, but also a professional reputation in other states a reputation which has brought him several lucrative offers from other companies in various parts of the United States. But he has preferred to remain in his native Commonwealth.

Since his residence in Lehi, James H. has given a large part of his time and talents to the work of public service. Interested in the development and betterment of the city, he has endeavored to aid every worthy movement to the extent of his power. He has served the people in the City Council one term and also as a Commissioner of Utah County.

Profoundly interested in education, he was at one time a member of the School Board and has ever been an earnest supporter of Lehi's schools. He was one of the prime movers in the organization of the Commercial Club and has since been its president.

His public work has also taken the form of helping to establish new enterprises in Lehi. His first venture in this line was that of a director in the Lehi Mercantile Company now closed. He was also one of the originators of the Lehi Roller Mills and the State Bank of Lehi, being still a director of the latter institution and of the Bank of American Fork.

Of late years he has developed a large section of land west of the Jordan River, in dry-farming, fruit-raising, and stock-raising.

In 1903, when the Lehi Ward was divided, James H. Gardner was chosen Bishop of the Second Ward, a position which he still holds.

