



## **An Expanded View of our Walsh/Fish Heritage**

We are all familiar with the story of William and Alice Walsh leaving England, enduring the trials of the North Atlantic, and crossing the plains in the Martin and Willie Handcart Companies to be with the Saints. We are also familiar with the story of Alice creating the first plaid cloth in Utah, many of us memorizing and reciting the story in school and church, proudly displaying a small piece of that cloth. Despite these wonderful stories of our heritage, how many of us are familiar of some of the other aspects of the Walsh and Fish lines?

I had the unique opportunity to live in the United Kingdom for a year to pursue my Master's degree in the city of Liverpool. Liverpool was the city from which William, Alice, and their children departed their homeland to join the Saints and strengthen their newly found faith in Utah. Liverpool was at that time the great port city of Britain and part of the county of Lancashire. Since Liverpool was close enough to our ancestors' hometowns, I took a daytrip to go and visit these towns to experience a part of our past. I conducted some research beforehand so that I could visit the sites that would have been frequented by our ancestral families. Here, I present my findings and photos of the day I ventured into Blackburn, Darwen, and Accrington. I hope that you will experience some of that newfound respect that I have felt as I discovered what made us Walshes and Fishes.

### **Darwen**

In the days that the Fish family lived in this industrial town, it was known as Over-Darwen. This large town has its heart in a valley of the Pennine Mountains, with portions of it flowing up the side of the surrounding foothills. Darwen is just south of Blackburn and has a very visible industrial revolution past, with several old factories and mills imposing their silhouettes on the town skyline.

Darwen is the ancestral home of the Fishes. A visit to the town's old cemetery yielded many headstones with the Fish name on it. Alice was the daughter of Jane Fish, who was the daughter of Thomas Fish. No biological father is listed with her in any records, and it wasn't until her mother married Edmund Bury several years later that Alice had a father.

Two old churches associated with our line of the are now closed, with the buildings standing but in a derelict state. The Wesleyan Methodist Church is in the city center and was a grand building. A very small cemetery remains, and most headstones were in such a bad state that they were indecipherable. However, I found one upright headstone that mentioned the Fish line. Alice was christened here in 1829.

The other church, which was frequented by our direct line, was the Lower Independent Church in northeastern Darwen. This was a much smaller building, and quite a bit older, dating back to 1719. This church was near the edge of town and in Alice's time may have been more rural. The grounds here are very overgrown, and many of the headstones were so covered in brush that I could not determine the names. I definitely found links with the Fish line and with Edmund Bury's family line.

William moved to Darwen from Accrington where he met Alice, possibly at work or at a civil function such as a town social. Alice worked at a local textile mill, where apparently she was quite successful and moved up the ranks, which was a notable achievement for women in that period. William and Alice eventually joined the Mormon church, and the meeting house was located at the far south side