

# THE MACKS OF GILSUM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

## MATERNAL ANCESTORS OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH.

THE town of Gilsun, nestled in the hill country of Cheshire county, New Hampshire, and on the banks of the Ashuelot, a tributary to the Connecticut river, may well be called the home of the Macks—maternal ancestors of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Gilsun numbers among the proprietors of the town holding title by direct grant of "George III, by grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, king, defender of the faith," etc., several of the Macks who were descendants of the Mack family of Lyme, Conn., from whom the Prophet Joseph in the maternal line descended, and here are still several descendants of the family living in Gilsun. The author of the very exhaustive history of the town of Gilsun, Mr. Silvanus Hayward, A. M., and which was published in 1881, gives the following introduction to the Mack genealogy.

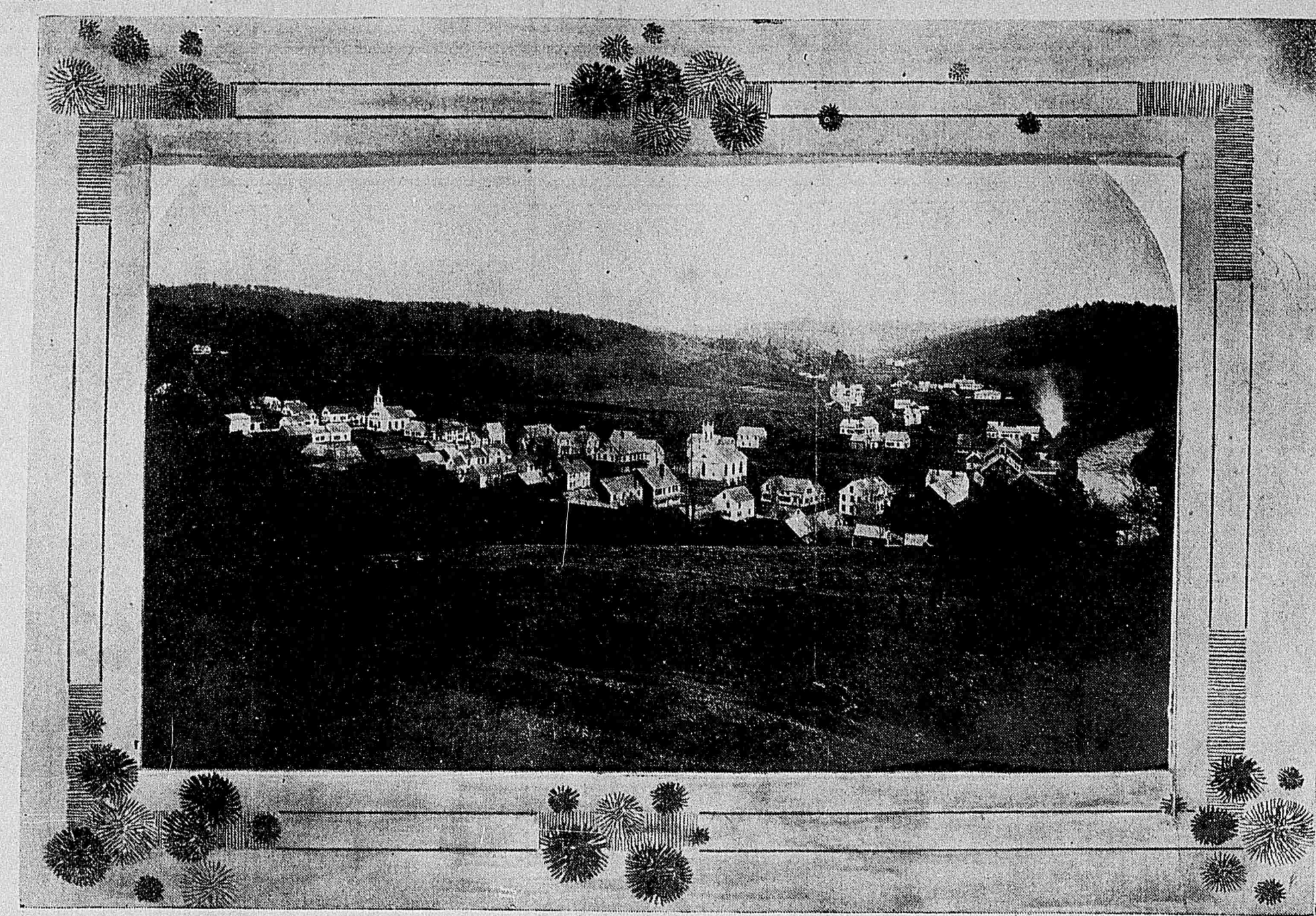
"This family is of Scotch origin. William P. Mack of Stanstead, Canada, a grandson of Silas Mack of Marlow (who was brother or nephew of the first Solomon—father of Lucy Smith—mentioned below) writes that 'three brothers left Scotland; two emigrated to America, one to Ireland, and that 'part of their coat of arms was a bear's head.' He also says, 'I have heard my father say he never knew a Mack convicted of crime.' On careful inquiry, I find there is no family of the name of Mack who bore a bear's head, but the Scotch families of McDougall and McTearliff bore a bear's head crested. It is thought his family were of those who 'dropped their original names, retaining the prefix only, thereby being better able to escape persecution on account of their religious beliefs.' The first ascertained ancestor of this branch of the Mack family was Ebenezer Mack of Lyme, Conn., where he 'dropped dead' as he was bringing in a 'back log,' in 1777. His wife was Hannah Gates d. 1796. Among their children were Elisha, Samuel, Solomon, and Hepzibeth m. Abishal Tubbs of Marlow.

Three of the sons of Ebenezer Mack of Lyme, Conn., finally settled at Gilsun and were more or less united in their industrial activities. Elisha, the elder of the three brothers, was evidently of martial disposition, active in the revolutionary war and known to the local fame of Cheshire county as the hero of the "Keene affair." Briefly told, the Keene affair is this: At the outbreak of the Revolution there were no troops in Gilsun, while at Keene there lived quite a number of that following, strong in their sympathies for the government of King George III, and resorted to be active partisans in his cause. At any rate, 13 of the Keene inhabitants above the age of 21 refused to sign what was called the "association test," namely, that "we do hereby solemnly engage and promise that we will to the utmost of our power at the risk of our lives and fortunes, with arms, oppose the hostile proceedings of the British fleets and armies against the United American colonies." Others of the male inhabitants had fled from the town for a season in order to avoid declaring their intentions. Under these circumstances Capt. Mack of Gilsun thought himself justified in taking prisoners Keene's Tories. Accordingly on May 31, 1779, he assembled a company of militia at Partridge's Tavern, near Wright's Mills, and directed them by a night's march to go to Keene and guard the houses where the Tories were known to reside. At sun rise he himself rode into Keene at the head of the rest of this company of militia, and when he came to the house of a Tory he ordered the sentinel standing at the door to bring out the prisoner, and so proceeded until he had placed under arrest all who were known to be favorable to the Tory cause. He had so soon succeeded in his project, however, than he was emphatically overruled by his colonel in the militia, and the Tories set free, much to the discomfort of valiant Capt. Mack, who retired somewhat crestfallen. But if in this episode the captain was over-zealous, it was zeal in a good cause on the right side, and the historian of Gilsun does him the justice to remark:

"There is no doubt that Capt. Mack, who was a bold and honorable officer in the service of his country, was stirred up to the expedition by some of the zealous Whigs of Keene, who were afraid to be seen in it themselves. He felt the great importance of breaking up the Tory bands, and his action, though rash, ill-considered, and futile in its immediate results, had without doubt a salutary influence."

A further record of Capt. Elisha Mack in the Revolution is stated as follows:

"Capt. Elisha Mack was in Capt. Wetherbee's company, Wyman's regiment, as private, enlisted July 2, 1776, and was at Mount Independence, Nov. 1, same year; was lieutenant in Davis Howlett's company, Ticonderoga, engaged May 7, discharged June 17, 1777; was captain of a company raised in Ashley's regiment June, 1777, to re-inforce the Continental army at Ticonderoga, (see roll); and in command of a



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The home of the Macks, maternal ancestors of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is situated on the Ashuelot river, tributary to the Connecticut, and is one of the most picturesque hill-towns of the Granite state.

company in Col. Moses Nicholas' regiment, Stark's brigade, at Saratoga, joined July 22, discharged Sept. 3, 1777. He was the hero of the Keene raid, (outlined above).

Samuel Mack, another of the three brothers, appears to have had a genius for mechanics. The historian of Gilsun gives him the credit of being the first man to build a dam across the Connecticut river. He was employed in this work by an English company to build one at Fellows Falls where he was assisted by his brother Solomon (father of Lucy Mack, mother of the prophet), and Solomon Mack, Jr., brother of Lucy. "The water being deep he made himself a water-proof leather suit with a pipe to supply air with which he went under the water to place the stone and timbers in place. He wore this suit at the first celebration of independence at Montague, Mass. He also invented a machine for hulling wheat, but sickened and died before the patent for his invention was issued to him.

Of Solomon Mack, the father of Lucy Smith, we know much more than of the other two Mack brothers, since his history is extant in the writings of his daughter Lucy. (See history of the Prophet Joseph by Lucy Smith.) But it is not so generally known that some of Solomon's descendants, other than Lucy, became interested in the great work of the Lord inaugurated through the Prophet Joseph. Solomon Mack died Aug. 23, 1820, the same year in which his grandson Joseph Smith the prophet received his first vision; and Solomon Mack II, of whom Lucy Mack Smith speaks as being present in worldly affairs, while he lived until Oct. 12, 1851, yet he seems not to have been attracted by the message his nephew had to proclaim to the world. His son Solomon Mack III, however, and also his son Chilion Mack received the gospel, the former becoming president of the branch of Gilsun and the latter the clerk of said branch. Chilion Mack was also the first postmaster of Gilsun, being appointed on Dec. 20, 1828; he held the office for 14 years. He was a wheelwright by trade, but spent most of his life in farming. He also spent several years in the mines of California. Solomon Mack III also started west, but for the pur-

pose of uniting with the Church in Utah. He got as far as Kansas, but yielding to the solicitations of his family, who were unwilling to go further, he returned to Gilsun. Both Solomon Mack III and Chilion Mack were ordained to the priesthood under the hands of Elders Brigham Young and Orson Pratt, at Peterborough, July 19 or 14, 1841; and the former was ordained a high priest in Philadelphia, on Dec. 25, 1856, by Elders John Taylor and N. H. Felt. The following is the history of the branch of the Church at Gilsun as recorded in the history of that town by Silvanus Hayward, A. M.:

### MORMONS OR LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

"The fact that Lucy Mack, the mother of Joseph Smith, was a native of Gilsun, and that her brother and his family resided here, was undoubtedly the principal cause of the introduction of Mormonism into Gilsun. In 1836, Joseph Smith, Sen., father of the prophet, and his brother John, visited their relatives in Gilsun, and vainly endeavored to convert them to their new doctrines. In 1841, Elders E. P. Maginn and Austin Cowles came and held a protracted meeting in the old meetinghouse. They received converts from this and neighboring towns. A church was organized, called 'Gilsun Branch of Latter-day Saints.' The exact date of organization is not known. The first record is dated Tuesday morning, 8 o'clock, a. m., October 1842. Meetings were held in the following years at Dorr's hall and various other places, with considerable success. The elders seem to have been itinerant. The following elders are named in the records, as being here, during the history of 'Gilsun Branch': E. P. Maginn, Austin Cowles, Ormus Bates, Luther Reed, Charles A. Adams, and Jesse C. Little. The records are evidently incomplete. The first recorded choice of president of the Gilsun branch is that of Elder Adams, April 30, 1843. Chilion Mack was the only clerk. In August following, Elder Little was chosen president, and apparently continued in office as long as the 'Gilsun Branch' retained its organization. After five or six years this branch got into quarrels in matters of discipline. The cause is not clear in the record, but old members say it was connected mainly with the subject of intemperance. The records of the new branch intimate that the trouble was an unwillingness on the part of some, to submit to the Church authorities. In 1849, Elder Joseph Grover, recommended by the 'Twelve Apostles,' came to Gilsun, and after holding meetings and investigating the troubles, organized a new branch, at the dwelling house of Solomon Mack, Jr., May 26, 1849. After some appropriate remarks by Elder Grover showing the importance of saints being united and living in love and fellowship with each other, that 'our faith may be strengthened, and that we instruct the another in principles of righteousness as we shall obtain information through the means prepared of God for that purpose, even through His servants possessing the priesthood and the revelations which are or shall be given for the benefit of the saints in the last days.'

"That such love and union does not exist in the Gilsun branch is plain and obvious to every thinking mind and contention is calculated to destroy the saints. Therefore it is not wisdom to introduce new members into a branch full of contention. And as there are members that do not belong to any branch, we will organize a branch to be called the Cheshire County branch, there is the true Church. Therefore we discontinue all apostasy from the presidency and council of said Church. We will uphold the quorum of the twelve apostles and all the quorums of the Church."

"We will hold ourselves ready at all times to abide by the council and instruction of the above named authority. And that all shall be united; for



OSCAR ADDISON MACK.

"Considering the shortness of his life, it would be difficult to mention a name that brings more honor to Gilsun than his."—Silvanus Hayward, historian of the town of Gilsun.

union is our motto, peace our theme, the glory of God and salvation of man our object.

"May the blessings of heaven and earth attend us, is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

JOSEPH GROVER, President.

Willard S. Cady, Clerk.

"A part of these original members, and some received soon after, were those who had been excluded from the Gilsun branch. Having been duly organized, they specially retaliated, at a conference held in Dorr's hall, July 21 and 22, 1849, by cutting off the remaining members of the Gilsun branch. At this conference much was said about the authority of the church and for apostasy, etc., etc. Elder Solomon Mack was chosen president, which office he held as long as any organization was sustained. This branch seems to have been very inactive as there are almost no records till Aug. 21, 1855, when the branch was reorganized by Martin H. and E. M. Peck. Solomon Mack was re-elected president, and John Young, clerk. In 1858, Benjamin H. Horton was chosen clerk and no other has since been chosen. In 1857, the branch was visited by Elder Wm. H. Branch on a mission from Utah to the state of New Hampshire, who rebaptized most of the members. The remaining records consist mainly of visits by various messengers from Utah, and baptisms, rebaptisms and ordinations.

"The resident members of the Gilsun branch as shown by the records in order of joining, were the following: Daniel Converse, Edna Beckwith, William Barnes (Barron), Solomon Mack, Jr., Rebecca Davis, Dolly Converse, Lucy Gates, Cynthia Barron, Martha Metcalf, Rebecca Chapin, David Adams, Sophia Foster, Nancy B. Foster, Alice Adams, Joanna Beckwith, William Campbell, Alvah Foster, New Hendee, Susan Gates, Stephen Foster, Chilion Mack, Zenas D. Metcalf, Kimball Metcalf, Sally Loveland, Finley Gullow, Luther S. Hemmingway, Alvira Hemmingway, Nancy Campbell, Hemon Gates, Abigail Davis, Eliza Foster, Reiley Foster, Adaline Mack, Hannah Mack, Eliza G. Nash, Zerua Gullow, Asa Nash, Paul Farnsworth, Israel Loveland, Sally Murphy, Fanny

Hendee, Lydia Foster and Bethany Barron.

"The original members of the Cheshire county branch were: Joseph Grover, Rebecca D. Grover, Willard S. Cady, Abigail M. Cady, Solomon Mack, Jr., and Adaline K. Mack."

"Of those not members of the Gilsun branch, the following are recorded:

"Lorenna Howard, John H. A. Young, Elisha Nash, George S. Howard, Deliverance Nash, J. W. Pierce, Benj. H. Horton, Andrew I. Gates, Ellen Gates, Lucy Gates and John Dustin.

"Under the re-organization of 1857, there were only eight resident members, with no new names. Some other of our citizens are reported to have been baptized by Elder Mack, but these are all that the records show.

"We find also the record of the following ordinations of Gilsun men: 'At Walpole, April 13, 1844, William Campbell and Luther S. Hemmingway, at Peterboro, July 13 or 14, 1844, under the hands of Elders Brigham Young and Orson Pratt, Solomon Mack, Zenas D. Metcalf, Stephen Foster, Elisha Foster, Alvah Foster, Chilion Mack and Asa Nash, July 1, 1857, Heman Gates, by William Walker and Solomon Mack, at Philadelphia, Pa., Dec. 25, 1856, Solomon Mack was ordained to the high priesthood, by Elders John Taylor and N. H. Felt.

"No meetings have been held for a long time, and now of these members have apparently fallen away from Mormonism, some to other churches and some to no church. It is impossible to say how many quietly retain their faith in the Mormon Church. (This, by it remembered, was written in 1881.) Elder Mack is the only one who openly maintains the doctrine at present. John H. A. Young and his wife Edna, William Campbell and his wife Nancy, Luther S. Hemmingway and his wife Elvira, went to join the body of the faithful at Utah. Several of them perished on the way. Elder Solomon Mack went as far as Kansas, but his family not being willing to go with him, he returned home."

Oscar Addison Mack is a name of which Gilsun is justly proud; and his successful though brief career adds lustre to his family name. He was a descendant of the Macks of Lyme, Connecticut. His father, Berzeleel Mack, was born in Connecticut, 1759. Berzeleel married Rachel Hurd of Gilsun in 1785. The Hurds were

among the early settlers of Gilsun; and Abner Mack, grandfather of Oscar, is named among the original proprietors of Gilsun. It is said by the historian of Gilsun that he inherited from his father, Berzeleel Mack, a natural aptitude for learning, and from his mother, a taste for military life. "His mother dying while he was yet an infant," our historian says, "and his father when he was about five years of age, he was brought up in the family of Capt. True Webster. While yet a boy, in his eagerness to learn, he would spend a large portion of the night in study. Rev. James Tisdale seeing his aptitude for study took a great interest in his success, and it was largely due to his influence that he applied for and received an appointment as cadet at West Point, where he graduated in 1836. He ranked No. 8 in a class of 48. His military record, as taken from the files of the war department at Washington, is as follows:

"Graduated from the United States Military academy and appointed brevet second lieutenant, Third artillery, July 1, 1850; second lieutenant, Fourth artillery, Jan. 9, 1851; first lieutenant, Fourth artillery, Feb. 14, 1856; captain, Thirtieth infantry, May 14, 1861; major, Ninth infantry, June 19, 1866; assigned to First infantry, Dec. 15, 1870; lieutenant-colonel, Twenty-first infantry, Dec. 15, 1874.

Brevet major, United States army, Sept. 10, 1861, for gallant services at the battle of Currituck Ferry, Virginia; lieutenant-colonel, Dec. 31, 1862, for gallant and distinguished services at the battle of Murfreesboro, Tenn.; and colonel, March 13, 1865, for gallant and meritorious services during the war.

Served as major and aide-de-camp of volunteers from April 16, 1863, until honorably mustered out of service, July 1, 1866.

Service: On graduating leave to Sept. 30, 1850. With regiment on duty to Sept. 7, 1852. On leave of absence to Oct. 2, 1852. With regiment to Sept. 13, 1855; on leave to Oct. 5, 1855; with regiment to Nov. 20, 1856; on detached service as assistant commissary subsistence at Fort Myers, Fla., to Dec. 20, 1856; on duty with regiment in the field, Fla., to Jan. 18, 1857; on detached service as assistant commissary of subsistence at Fort Brooke, Fla., to Jan. 6, 1858; on leave of absence to April 1, 1858, and absent sick

June 22, 1859. With regiment and commanding Company I, Fourth artillery in the field to May 1, 1862. On staff to Gen. George H. Thomas until wounded at battle of Stone river, Dec. 31, 1862; absent at Concord, N. H., to Nov. 9, 1863, and on duty as adjutant, District of Columbia, to Nov. 20, 1867. Before retiring board at New York City; per court martial duty at Washington and commanding Camp Gaston, Cal., on May 14, 1869, and on duty in war department from June 11, 1869, in addition thereto evering in inspection of national cemeteries from Jan. 16, 1871, to date of death.

Died (while on special duty to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and return) Oct. 22, 1876, on the cars at Brunswick, Missouri.

One of his most intimate friends writes:

"It was impossible for any one to know Col. Mack, without admiring him, he was so perfectly unselfish, and such a consistent Christian in every position in life, and such a true and loyal soldier to his country that he willingly gave up everything to advance the interest of the service he loved so dearly. He was a great lover of nature, and all of his leisure time for years he had devoted to the study of botany, so he was peculiarly fitted for the care of the national cemeteries, which he took unwearied pains to render beautiful. He was always very proud of his native state, and glad to proclaim himself a native of New Hampshire. He was confirmed as a member of the Episcopal church in Germantown, Penn., in 1857, and his whole life was full of good deeds, doing kindnesses without number, never letting his left hand know what his right was doing. His good example was felt by every one. Among his soldiers he was beloved and respected, and his own immediate family and friends were devoted to him. He was buried from the Church of the Epiphany of which he was a member, and sleeps in the Congressional cemetery at Washington, D. C."

Thus shines a good name even in a wicked world.

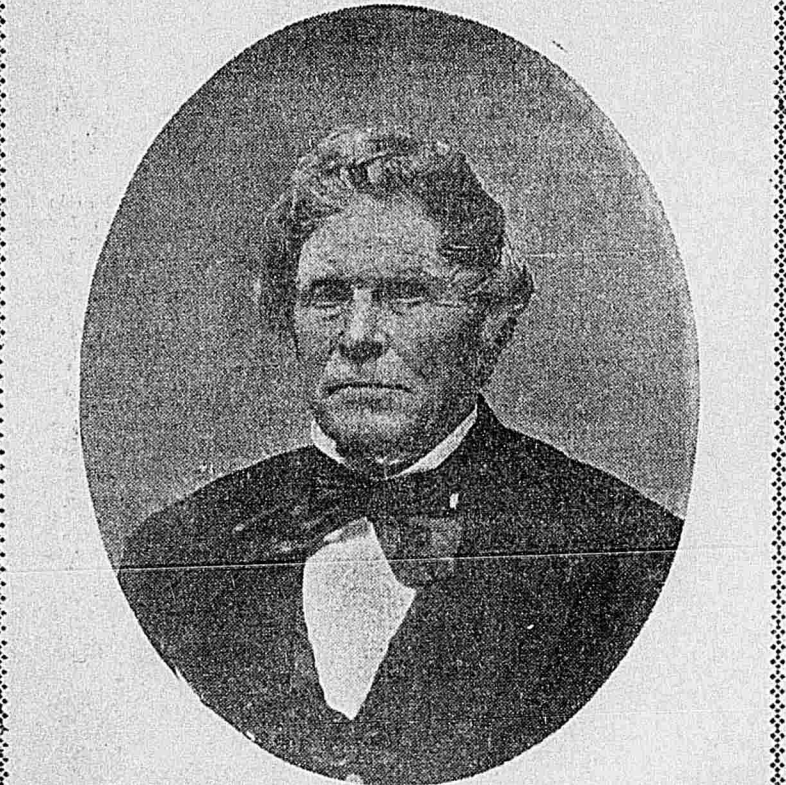
Taking it all in all, the maternal ancestors of our venerated prophet, Joseph Smith, both in the direct line through which he descended, and the collateral branches, were people who may not resist being proud of. They were not inferior people. They were a part of the lower classes of society; or among those who followed mean or petty employments. They were among the robust, stalwart, brave, plucky people who faced the dangers and hardships of the wilderness and overcame both. They assisted in the establishment of civilization in the New World. They were all patriots and gave their full share of officers and soldiers to every war in which our country has been engaged from the American Revolution to the war between the states.

"Simple their lives, yet theirs the race When Liberty sent forth her warriors. Who crowded Bunker's heights of red—By Hope through years were led, And witnessed Yorktown's sun Set on a nation's banner spread, A nation's freedom won."

And what is true of the maternal ancestry of our prophet is equally true of his paternal ancestry. And what is true of the prophet's ancestry both paternal and maternal is well known equally true of nearly all the early families that settled the Church in the United States, in Canada and England; and I doubt not but of other countries also. There is small need—no need at all in fact—when the Church is attacked on the ground that her converts were of the lower strata of society, and of those who followed petty and mean employments—there is no need of falling back upon Paul's apology for some of his converts at Corinth as means of defense or apology for the early converts of Mormonism. It is doubtless true that the early Christian converts at Corinth needed the apology which Paul made for them—since that great apostle volunteers it—"not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;" but the "foolish," the "weak," the "displeased," and the "base things of the world," in that particular branch had been chosen. But it is not so in the case of the early families who accepted the gospel in this last dispensation. And when it is charged that they were among the abjectly poor, the dispirited, the base, the degraded, the proper answer is an emphatic denial of the charge, and an equally emphatic affirmation of their being of the nobility of the earth, the benefactors of their race, the pioneers of civilization, making the wilderness fields, and the desert gardens, nation builders, they were shipping God by service to man and fatherland—men whose lives had been hid with God in Christ, but sent to earth in their day and time, that they might receive the truth, exalt it, make it honorable, and establish it in the earth.

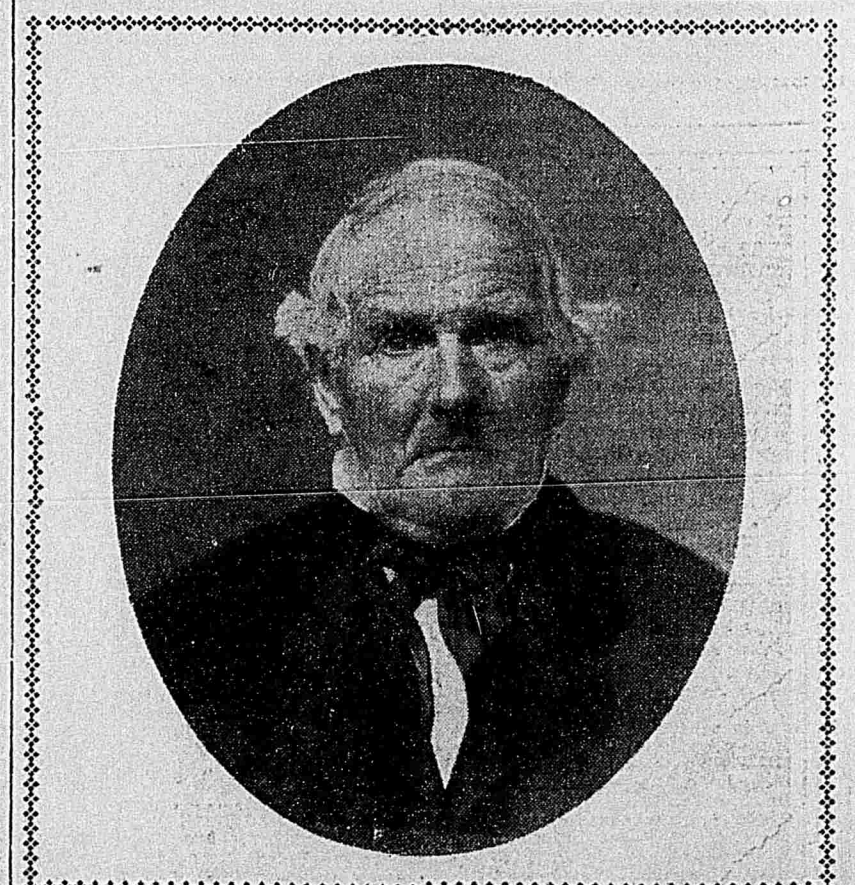
B. H. ROBERTS.

Elder Roberts secured a copy of the history of the town of Gilsun, while on his recent visit to the east and has deposited it in the Church Historian's office. It doubtless will prove a veritable mine of genealogical information, since 174 of its quarto pages are devoted to genealogies, in which appears many family names of the early settlers of Utah.



SOLOMON MACK III.

Solomon Mack III, nephew of Lucy Mack, mother of the prophet, "the last of the captains under the militia law," wrote Silvanus Hayward in 1881, historian of the town of Gilsun, "and now, although far past the prime of life, he is exceedingly fond of the martial sound of life and drum, and still retains the spirit and vitality of his youthful days. He has been for many years an ardent and indefatigable worker in the total abstinence cause." He was also for a number of years president of the branch of the Latter-day Saints Church at Gilsun.



CHILION MACK.

Nephew of Lucy Mack, mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and for a number of years clerk of the branch of the Church of the Latter-day Saints at Gilsun. "He spent several years in the mines of California," writes the historian of Gilsun, "where he had a varied experience. He was the first postmaster of Gilsun, and held the office 14 years."