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Margaret Ada Adam Henderson

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Birth: Aug. 12, 1816, Scotland
 Death: Aug. 2, 1900
 San Bernardino
 San Bernardino County
 California, USA

Margaret Ada/McDonald Adam was born to William Thom Adam and Isabel(Laird) Adam (although another source says that her parents were William McDonald Adam, a highlander and Isabel (Glen) Adam, a lowlander. Margaret was born on Aug. 12, 1816 in Calder Braes, Lanarkshire County, Scotland. Her great grandfather was James Adam, born in 1723. Margaret's sisters were: Isabel (Mrs. John Grant), Katherine (Mrs. Patrick), Agnes (Mrs. John Easton) and Jemma (Mrs. George Easton). Margaret's brothers were Charles (Dr. Charles Adam) who owned an apothecary shop in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire, Scotland, as well as William and Alexander 'Aleck' Adam. Neither her brother, Charles nor her sister, Mrs. Patrick, ever went to America.

On June 23, 1833, at the age of 17, Margaret married David Henderson. By 1849, Margaret and David had seven children:

- 1) William McDonald, b. 1834, d. Sept. 11, 1904 (marr. Mary M. Winn)
- 2) Isabel/la Henderson, b. March 1/10, 1835, d. Aug. 4, 1890 (marr. William Nish)
- 3) Margaret Victoria b. July 26, 1837/8 - d. Sept. 6, 1921 (marr. Charles J. Mogeau and after his death, Henry C. Yager)
- 4) David Glen, b. March 28, 1842, d. July 19, 1926 (marr. Matilda Caroline Hawker.
- 5) Jeannette Adam, b. June 7, 1844, d. Dec. 8, 1936 (marr. Thomas 'Tom' B. Walkinshaw, and later, William Brown Roberts of Corona, Ca.)
- 6) Mary A., b. May 27/31, 1848, d. May 24, 1904 (marr. William Roberts Levick and then Thomas H. 'Tom' Ashcroft of Corona, Ca.)
- 7) Charles, who died as an infant.

At the time of their marriage, David was working at the Calder Iron Works as a collier (miner). He was injured in a fall of slate in a quarry. It is said that he never fully recovered from this injury. He also worked as a grocer. Some time in the 1840's, David and his family came into contact with the Church of the Latter Day Saints. The Mormon Church provided money for the purpose of immigrating followers of the church to the 'Land of Saints', the new home of the Mormons in Salt Lake City. Three families, connected by marriage, immigrated to America together; the Hendersons, the Adam and Easton families. The reasons why David and Margaret decided to leave Scotland are probably many. This was a period of famine in Scotland and Ireland. As highlanders, they were not allowed to practice any of the Highland customs. Work and life was very hard as miners in almost slave-like



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conditions. It is not hard to imagine that the Henderson family wanted freedom, free land of their own in a 'God given climate' and the ability to practice their customs and religion. In 1849, the Hendersons packed up five of their children and joined the Easton and extended Adam families to sail to the land of promise. More of the family would follow in 1850, joining Margaret and David in St. Louis, Missouri.

They began their journey in Glasgow, sailing to Liverpool, England. From there, they boarded the ship North America for their eight week voyage to America. Immigration records show that David and Margaret sailed from Liverpool with six of their children; William, age 14; Margaret, 12; David Jr., 7; Jeannette, 5; Mary, 2. (There was also a Charles, age 3 months, listed). The eldest daughter, Isabella, stayed in Scotland, joining them when her grandfather sailed the following year. The ship crossed the Atlantic to the south of the Florida Peninsula into the Gulf of Mexico. Rough weather and seas, a shortage of water, typhoid and cholera made the journey a hard one according to the ship's log. Forty-three persons died en route and were buried at sea.

Landing was made in New Orleans in November of 1848 where they then traveled up the Mississippi into St. Louis. The family was to live in St. Louis for a year so that money could be saved for provisions, a wagon and a team of oxen for the trip west. It was during this time, most likely between June and September of 1849 that David Henderson died from heat stroke (or possibly cholera) while working in the coal mines near St. Louis. He was buried in St. Louis in an area known at the time as Dogtown. He left Margaret a widow at the age of 34 with 6 children to care for. This was just the beginning of hard times for Margaret. The area of St. Louis was in the grip of a major cholera epidemic. Her sister, Agnes, was so sick with the cholera, that she was on her deathbed and burial arrangements were being made. Margaret nursed her back to health while caring for her own six children, as well as Agnes Easton's five children in St. Louis. (They were living next door to each other in the 1850 census and David is not listed.) Another of Margaret's sisters, Isabelle, her husband John Grant, and all of her children but one, died from cholera while in St. Louis. The surviving child, Johnny Grant, was taken in and raised by Margaret and her sister, Agnes.

When Margaret's husband, David Henderson, died in St. Louis, it was the Mormon custom that no woman of age remain unmarried. Margaret Adam Henderson became the second or plural wife of John/James Easton, who was the husband of her sister, Agnes. This was most likely preferable to having a husband chosen for her by the Mormon Church. From St. Louis, some of the members of the family made the trip west to Salt Lake City in



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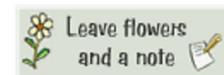
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Rest in heavenly peace and God Bless you.

- [Steve Edquist ~In Memory Of Aaron & Scrappy~](#)

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1851. The company was then made up of the Hendersons, Burdics, Keirs, Eastons, Adam's grandfather Adam's wife Margaret Thompson, Levick, Wm. Nish, John Thompson - killed enroute by Indians, and John Thompson's brother. They went up the Platte River, ferried across and went on alone, reaching Salt Lake in November. In the spring, some of them went to open coal mines and established Cedar City, Iron Co., Utah. The families worked, were thrifty, the boys worked building a sawmill, but they resented the heavy hand of the church. In Sept. of 1852/3, a train consisting of fifteen or sixteen wagons was made up at Cedar City to come overland to California, following the route of the Keir train. The family located in San Bernardino, in Southern California. John/James Easton and his wife, Agnes, moved on to Oregon. Margaret stayed behind in San Bernardino with her six children from David and young John Alexander, her son, fathered by John/James Easton. Margaret left the Mormon Church, which did not seem to suit her, and resumed using the name of Henderson. John eventually adopted the Henderson name and in time, became the 7th Mayor of San Bernardino. John married Asenia Ferrel Wilson.

Margaret Helena 'Peg' Levinson tells about a time when a small pox epidemic hit San Bernardino. She talks of a time when Margaret Adam Henderson had read quite extensively and knew there was a system called Vaccination and knew the principle of it. She found a milk cow that was infected. It is said that she found the pox and cut the pox from the udders of the cow. With the infected pus and a pen knife, she vaccinated the family and everyone else who chose to participate. They all developed a scar about an inch in diameter but none of them caught the smallpox.

Margaret lived on a 40 acre ranch on the bench just north of Rialto Ave., overlooking Lytle Creek. It is said that she was crippled with arthritis in her later years.

Margaret was very much the matriarch of the modern Henderson family and one of the founding pioneers of the San Bernardino Valley. Her name is listed on a plaque in front of the San Bernardino Courthouse. Margaret's descendents settled the San Bernardino Valley and became mayors, firefighters, police officers and leaders in the community.

*Note: The portrait of Margaret Henderson as an older woman comes from the California Heritage Room of the San Bernardino City Library.

Family links:

Spouse:

[David Henderson \(1811 - 1849\)](#)

Children:

[William McDonald Henderson \(1834 - 1904\)*](#)

[Isabella Henderson Nish \(1835 - 1890\)*](#)

[Margaret Victoria Henderson Yager \(1837 -](#)

1921)*

David Glenn Henderson (1842 - 1926)*

Jeannette Adam *Henderson* Roberts (1844 -
1936)*

Jeannette Adam Walkinshaw *Henderson* Roberds
(1844 - 1936)*

Mary Adam *Henderson* Ashcroft (1848 - 1904)*

John Alexander Henderson (1856 - 1938)*

*[Calculated relationship](#)

Inscription:

Sacred to the memory of our beloved mother.

Burial:

[Pioneer Memorial Cemetery](#)

San Bernardino

San Bernardino County

California, USA

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