

# MARY BAKER EDDY MUSEUM

*and Historic Sites*



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## "FAMILY:" FROM NEW ENGLAND TO THE BLACK HILLS PART V

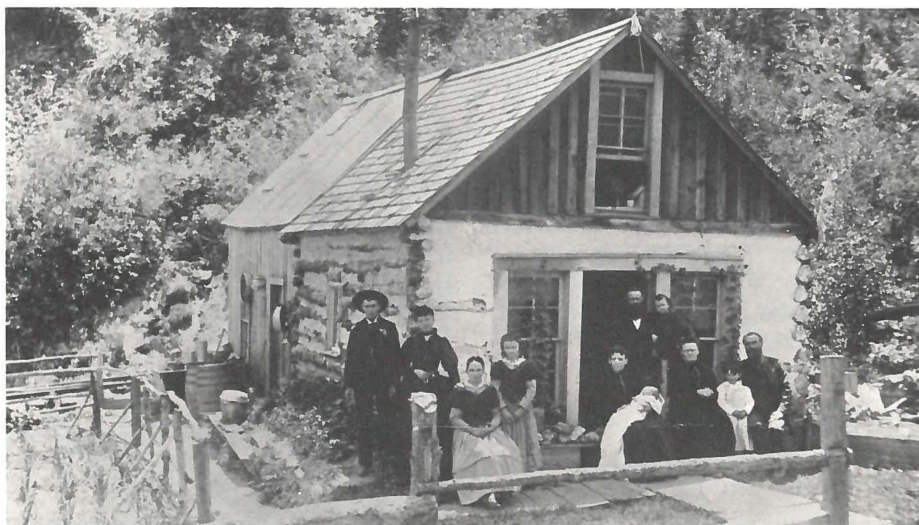
Jewel Spangler Smaus, author of *Mary Baker Eddy: The Golden Days*, continues the series - FAMILY.

Soon after the Civil War, a great wave of migration swept westward, as over a million soldiers returned to civilian life. At the same time, there was a sharp upswing in immigration, and competition for jobs became keen.<sup>1</sup>

When George Glover, Mrs. Eddy's son, found that his foster father, Russell Cheney, would not give him an interest in the farm in Winona, he joined his army friends searching for a place to settle.

There was little opportunity in his area. The situation is described in a letter in the Minnesota Historical Society collections. A wife writes from Winona to her family that she is coming for a visit because things are so "dull" that her husband will be "traveling around the state," looking for employment.<sup>2</sup>

George Glover's veterans file appears to state that during this period "he traveled about making a poor but honest living trading in cattle and similar business."<sup>3</sup> However, the handwriting on this particular document is difficult to decipher. His son George III stated vehemently to me that he knew very well that his father would not have had anything to do with cattle — that he had no use for these animals, and that he was certain that whoever had written this statement for his illiterate father



**The Glover home in the Black Hills, 1891. From left to right: Gershom, a friend, Mary (seated), Evelyn, Ellen seated with Andrew, George II standing holding George III, more friends.**

must have meant "horses." George further explained, as he did many times, that his father was knowledgeable and capable where horses were concerned.

"He broke lots of horses," George III said, "and was an expert at training them to the buggy and wagons. He never used a whip. He would start the team with a motion of his hand. His work was always with horses — not cattle. [However,] He always had a couple of milk cows but he never milked them. He didn't have the patience."

"He raised saddle horses," George continued in describing a later experience. "He had a brood mare. Once, he sold a colt 'Gold Dollar' . . . [that became] the fastest horse in South Dakota."<sup>4</sup>

Alistair Cooke reminds us in his popular history *America*, that "A century ago the railroad engine was as magical as a space ship."<sup>5</sup>

With the coming of the railroads, the face of America changed dramatically. Like magic, towns sprang up overnight as the iron rails moved inexorably across the continent.<sup>6</sup> George Glover, Mrs. Eddy's son, learned of railroad expansion as he traveled about the countryside. According to his son, he usually traveled in the company of Civil War veterans. There was a great sense of camaraderie among them, for they had shared much that no one else could ever understand.<sup>7</sup>

In this company, George learned that the Northern Pacific Railroad was pushing westward to make its crossing of the Red River. It was understood that wherever the railroad crossed the river, which divided Minnesota from Dakota Territory, a city would spring up. This territory was open for settlement. Railroad officials were anxious to keep the place of crossing a secret. So great



was their anxiety, that they "planted" a "farmer Brown" downstream from where they planned to make the crossing, to reinforce a rumor that the downstream area was to be "the place."<sup>8</sup>

However, George and his friends somehow learned that the crossing was to take place at what was to become Fargo, North Dakota. And as those who had not been so well informed finally rushed in to stake their claims, George was already snugly in place, along with the others who had arrived first.<sup>9</sup>

However, this snugness did not last long. The scramble for land claims was heated and extremely competitive. George had managed to stake his claim on a choice piece of land that was later to become part of the city limits of the city of Fargo. It was also near the river and timber. Not only were other pioneers eager to grab his claim, but the railroad was attempting to obtain as much as possible beyond the limits that had been granted them.

At one time, his son said, George II returned home on a winter evening to his homestead to find that the railroad had placed timbers on it with the expectation of taking over a portion. The young farmer had his horses drag the offending timber away. He then proceeded to dig deep holes along his property line, and fill these with water. Sturdy posts were placed in the holes. In the morning the water had frozen solid, and the Glover property was secure for the remainder of the winter.<sup>10</sup>

At some point in his wanderings, George and his mother lost track of each other. They had been in touch by letters until at least the latter part of 1868, when the son had sent his mother a photograph of his perpetual motion machine. There is no evidence to indicate at what point their letters evidently went astray. However, it is possible that as both moved about from place to place, each simply gave the postal service more than it could follow. The Minneapolis newspapers had long columns listing the unclaimed mail for that city. George would have had to find someone to both read and write his letters for him. His mother, Mary Glover Patterson, was not always prompt in answering letters.<sup>11</sup> To follow her life story at this time makes it quite plain why this was so.<sup>12</sup>

Although George III had many stories to tell about his father's life in

No. 235- LAND OFFICE at Fargo D.T. Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> 1876

It is hereby certified, That, in pursuance of Law, George W. Glover

of Leas County, State of Dakota on this day purchased of the Register

of this Office, the Lot or the S.E. 1/4 of Section No. 12 in Township No.

13 N. of Range No. 49 W. containing

2 dollar and 50 cents per acre, amounting to 400 acres, at the rate of

dollars and cents, for which the said George W. Glover has made payment in full as required by law.

Now, therefore, be it known, That on presentation of this certificate to the

COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE, the said George W. Glover shall be entitled to receive a Patent for the Lot above described.

Register

**Cash receipt for George Glover's Land Patent for one quarter section of land in Fargo, Dakota Territory, October 28, 1876.**

Fargo, it was necessary that I document this oral history. Because Mrs. Eddy's son settled with the first pioneers in the area, I found documentation impossible as I started the search.<sup>13</sup> Early fires had destroyed records, what there had been of them. Only scattered copies of the early newspapers were available. The town had been too new for records to be kept carefully — or kept at all. There was nothing to indicate that George II had ever lived there. I began to doubt the veracity of the stories. And yet, as usual, George III had recounted them with such explicit detail.

I headed for Fargo, across the width of Minnesota, after the research in Winona. It is about a four hour drive on the freeway. At the county court house, I asked the Registrar of Deeds for help in searching for the location of George Glover's property. He was sorry, but he could not help me unless I knew where the property was located. Obviously, we were going in circles. However, he would take me downstairs to where the records were kept.

Down winding back stairs, we proceeded to the basement, to what he informed me had been the former jail. Here, with a large key of the variety now displayed in museums, he opened first a heavy iron door and then a barred iron door, to the dungeon that had been transformed into a depository for records by the generous use of shelves. These were filled from floor to ceiling with great record books, many bound in old style brown leather. With a wave of

his hand, the Registrar directed me to help myself. No, he had no idea of where I should start — and he left me to the silence and the dusty volumes.

It did, indeed, look hopeless. Where was I to start? After several desultory attempts that made the search seem all the more difficult, I made an effort to quiet my thinking, which had become somewhat disquieted. Then that little inner intuition that comes to researchers on occasion, and that I have referred to previously, demanded of me a systematic search of the various sizes of record books. Gradually, I began to see some order. I settled on one set of very large, very old brown leather books. And suddenly I saw it: George W. Glover's original homestead record. With this information, I was able to return to the Registrar, and because I now knew where Glover had settled, the Registrar could give me the same information!

However, he then became quite helpful, and eventually I had a complete record of the Glover land which, as the frontier town grew rapidly, became in a few years a piece of valuable city property.

Greatly encouraged, I searched other sources, and came up with enough documentation to bring Glover's residence in Fargo to life.<sup>14</sup>

He was, indeed, one of the early pioneers. One report tells that he was one of the first to plow a portion of his land, which was one of the criteria for claiming a homestead in this prairie country. And several memoirs listed him among the early settlers.



I also found Glover's marriage record to Ellen Bessant.<sup>15</sup> Ellen was the daughter of Samuel Bessant, an immigrant from England who was a carpenter-contractor. He helped George build his house and outbuildings, and eventually his pretty daughter became Mrs. George Glover.

Life for Ellen Bessant was not easy. She was a city girl, from Southampton, England.<sup>16</sup> However, she came from a large family (many of her brothers and sisters followed her to America). She was used to hard work, for Ellen's mother had been an invalid before her death, and it had been necessary for the children to assist her. The Bessants had found that Fargo was still a part of the frontier, and although life was not as hard here as on the open prairie, it was as primitive as Mahala Cheney had found it as a pioneer in Minnesota.

A description of "the most trying of chores" given by an early woman settler in the west gives some idea of the work involved in keeping house: "1) bild fire in back yard to het kettle of rain water. 2) set tubs so smoke won't blow in eyes if wind is peart. 3) shave 1 hol cake lie sope in bilin water. 4) sort things. make 3 piles. 1 pile white, 1 pile cullord, 1 pile work briches and rags. 5) stir flour in cold water to smooth then thin down with bilin water [for starch]. 6) rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard. then bile. rub cullord but don't bile just rench and starch . . ."

The "receipe" continues, ending with: "go put on a cleen dress, smooth hair with side combs, brew cup of tee, set and rest and rock a spell and count blessings."<sup>17</sup>

It took stamina and faith to persist on this frontier. Searing heat, arctic cold, prairie fires, twisters, and spring floods were the trials that nature provided. And then there were the dust storms and the blizzards — and the grasshoppers. One great swarming infestation occurred when George was farming. George worked feverishly for several years, trying to establish his farm, turning the sod, which was a herculean task, and working for the great Dalrymple bonanza wheat farm, then being established.<sup>18</sup>

He never liked farming — he had enough of it in his youth. When George had earned enough to purchase eight head of Percheron horses (later twelve head), he decided to go into freighting. Gold had been discovered in the Black Hills, and there

was a great demand for fast freight service, the elite transportation of that day. It took someone with George's ability to handle horses, and his rugged outdoor experience to manage a fast freighting service. The country was desolate and rough, and there was still some danger from the Indians, but George ran a successful business for some time. Ox teams were capable, but slow, and the railroad, which now ran to Bismarck, was not always reliable.<sup>19</sup>

Available evidence indicates that at about this time, in 1877, George and his mother made contact again, and were writing to each other. In the meantime, she had received a divorce from Patterson, and had married Asa Eddy.<sup>20</sup> George was delighted to have a father and in his letters always included him.



**Mary Baker Eddy at the time of her son's first visit in 1879.**

The first letter available refers to a letter written previously in May of 1877, and goes on to tell about his preparations "for a crop next year" and that "I thought I would drop a line and let you know what I am trying to do this summer."<sup>21</sup>

However, the next existing letter is from Ellen Glover, who was called "Nelly" at this time. She writes to "Dear Mother," with the distressful news that "George has started for the Black Hills with two teams to freight. I tried as hard as I could to stop him but he could not see any other way to make enough to buy feed for his teams and seed for his land . . . Our

situation is such that we could not come to you this fall. The babies are both well. I should like for you to see the Babe as she is so fat I would like it very much if you would come out here and see us . . ."<sup>22</sup>

The next (extant) letter is written from Deadwood in the Black Hills, (then Dakota Territory). It is addressed to "Dear Mother & Father" and tells of the move to this area, dated August 1879.<sup>23</sup>

"My wife and I," a portion of the letter reads, "would be very glad to have you come & make your home with us as long as you live & we will endeavor to make everything as pleasant for you as possible. If we are as successful in our mines as we expect there will be nothing to prevent us from making you very comfortable."

George was full of enthusiasm about this booming, raw western gold town, and saw nothing but success ahead. He had sold his land in Fargo at a good profit and the family was now "living in a little log building . . . expect to put up a better one this fall. The location will give you plenty of room to join us either in one large fine building or in a separate one if you should prefer it."

No sooner had George settled his family in Deadwood, than he made his long awaited journey to meet his mother. It was to have been in Cincinnati, but whatever the arrangements had been, his mother was not there when he arrived, and he traveled on to Boston to find her.<sup>24</sup> The meeting was a joyous one, despite what must have been to the mother's exquisite taste and New England upbringing, a shock at her son's western appearance. And, of course, her distress at his illiteracy. (However, she was pleased with his "good manners," as noted earlier — "manners" she had taught him in those early formative years. Much of this childhood experience stayed with him all of his life — an influence that he treasured.)

The typical attire of the western frontier — jeans, boots and an all-purpose jacket — seemed strange to New Englanders, who were now many generations away from their pioneer days. Because he had spent most of his life in the outdoors and in the vastness of the west, George felt confined. Even his voice seemed "loud" to one little New England girl who mentioned this in her memoirs many years later.<sup>25</sup>



However, George was with his adored mother, whom he had worshipped from afar for the many years they had been separated. He did, however, long for her to be “a regular mother,” as his son described it to me. Even with her deep mother love for her son, this was to be increasingly difficult for Mrs. Eddy as she went forward in her mission, that included the founding of her church. But her many letters, still preserved, to her son and daughter-in-law and her grandchildren, show a yearning love for them and a very typical mother-grandmotherly concern for their progress — and especially for the education of the grandchildren.<sup>26</sup>

George had not been with his mother for more than a few months, when he received an anguished letter from his wife. Ellen described their desolate condition without him. One of the great fires that several times almost destroyed the canyon town of Deadwood, had swept fearfully close to their cabin. She wrote “... as it was very windy it swept for miles over the hills our stable caught 2 or 3 times and the sparks flew all over town like snow flakes in a storm they brought the hose & drenched all the cabins on this street.”

Ellen added that she had been very sick and that George's business arrangements were waiting for his return. “My dear husband,” she added, “com [sic] as soon as you can for I am almost dying to see you and the children talk of you constantly.”<sup>27</sup>

So George returned home. But there was always the two-way tug, his son told me. There were to be other visits to the mother/grandmother in New England. The photograph shown here was taken just before one of these visits and was carried by George to show his mother. The cabin was situated on one of his mining claims. Note the neatness, even in this primitive home. This neatness was typical of his father, George III told me.

In the photograph, George II is holding George III. The two had already become close companions. Ellen is holding Andrew, the last baby. At the far left are the three oldest children — Gershom standing, Mary (seated) and Evelyn (standing) in identical dresses. The others are friends.

In this short series, it has been impossible to give all of the information that I have gathered. However, it has been given in an effort to insert into the grand story of the life of Mary Baker Eddy, those bits and pieces concerning her family that have recently come to light. In the next series, I will tell of George's gold mining ventures and of the “fine building” that his mother gave the family.

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2. Alexander Chambers' family papers 1867, Minnesota Historical Society Research Center.
3. George Glover's Veterans File, Civil War Papers, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
4. George W. Glover III Oral History, collected by Jewel Spangler Smaus and transcribed by Edith L. Pitzer, Book III.
5. Alistair Cooke, *America* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1973).
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9. George Glover III Oral History, Book III. Also, I am greatly indebted to Hiram M. Drache and his wife Ada for their assistance when I was researching in the area, and for Mr. Drache's books: *The Day of the Bonanza* and *Challenge of the Prairie* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1964 & 1970).
10. George Glover III Oral History, Book III.
11. Nelly Glover to “Dear Mother,” Fargo,

N.D., 19 January 1878, Archives of The Mother Church, Boston, MA.

12. For this detail see Robert Peel's biography *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Discovery*, and *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Trial* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966 & 1971).
13. My thanks to Philip and Florence Bohne for their “scouting” in Fargo that led me to the final documentation.
14. Interview with Mr. A.F. Pinkham in Masonic Library, Fargo, N.D., May 2, 1917, North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies. Mrs. H.E. Crofford, “Pioneer Days in North Dakota,” *North Dakota Historical Society Quarterly*, vol. 2, No. 2 (Bismarck, N.D.: 1927). *Report of Historical Society*, “Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota,” vol. 1 (Bismarck: 1906). George W. Glover Land Patent File, Cash Receipt 235, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
15. Clay County (Minn.) Historical Society and North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies.
16. My personal research this year in England of parish records, city directories, newspapers, maps and at the General Register Office, St. Catherine's House, London regarding the Bessant Family. Also, I am again indebted to the indefatigable research of Barry Swackhamer.
17. Sandra L. Myres, *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982).
18. *The Sod House Frontier and Westward to the Pacific*.
19. George Glover III Oral History, Book IV Mike Hanley with Omer Stanford, *Sage Brush and Axle Grease*, (Jordon Valley, Oregon: Mike Hanley, 1976).
20. Robert Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Discovery* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).
21. G.W. Glover to “Dear Mother,” Fargo, N.D., 30 June 1877, Archives of The Mother Church, Boston, MA.
22. Nelly Glover to “Dear Mother,” Fargo, N.D., 19 January 1878, Archives of The Mother Church, Boston, MA.
23. George W. Glover and Nellie to “Dear Mother & Father,” Deadwood, S.D., 12 August 1879, Archives of The Mother Church, Boston, MA.
24. Robert Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Trial*, p. 69.
25. Mary Godfrey Parker, “A Friendship Through Two Generations,” *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Fourth Series (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1972), p. 24.
26. Letters from Mary Baker Eddy to her son George Glover and his family, Archives of The Mother Church, Boston, MA.
27. Nellie Glover to “Dear Husband & Mother,” Deadwood, S.D., 11 January 1880, Archives of The Mother Church, Boston, MA.

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