

## PERRY FITZGERALD HISTORY

Perry Fitzgerald, one of the original Utah Pioneers of 1847, was born December 22, 1815, in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. He was the son of John Fitzgerald and Leah Phillips. He was of Scottish-Irish descent. His opportunities for obtaining a scholastic education were very limited, but the home training which his parents set before him was of the most enabling nature, and these had a marked effect upon his whole life, and he was impressed with the importance of being strictly honest, moral, truthful, and to show proper consideration for his associates and particularly for the aged and unfortunate.

Brother Fitzgerald was ordained an Elder in 1846, and a High Priest in 1856.

He belonged to one of the old sturdy American Families which was represented in the Revolutionary war and the war of 1812.

He moved to Illinois and bought one hundred and sixty acres of land, where the city of Vermillion now stands. He received the Gospel in Illinois in 1842, and suffered the persecutions inflicted upon the people of his faith. After becoming a convert of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he broke up his home in Illinois in the spring of 1846, moving westward to Winter Quarters. While there, he was chosen by President Brigham Young as one of 143 explorers and pathfinders who left Winter Quarters in April 1847, and journeyed westward in search of a new home for his homeless and exiled people, of which John S. Higby was captain. They arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. After one month, President Brigham Young, with quite a number of those pioneers, including Perry Fitzgerald, started on the return trip across the plains to Winter Quarters for their families.

Those who had returned for their families commenced making preparations as fast as they could for their removal to the Salt Lake Valley, and on the 24th of May, 1848, many of the saints started out with their families. They arrived in safety, in September of that year.

In the early days in Utah, Perry rendered valuable service in defending the colonists during the Indian difficulties, and he showed conspicuous courage in the fight with the Indians at Battle Creek (now known as Pleasant Grove). During the Walker War he was active in every measure which was undertaken for the welfare of the people. His neat and orderly habits, his manly and dignified example made him a pillar of strength in the community where he lived. He believed in and practiced economy, buying only what he could pay for, never running into debt. He was never required to give his note as his word was as good as his bond, and he never signed a mortgage. He was a farmer, sheep and cattle raise, he loved fine horses and always drove a good team. He was a modest unassuming man, yet had the moral courage to oppose wrong and to defend right under all circumstances.

When he arrived in the Utah valley, he first located in Salt Lake City, where he assisted in building the fort. In 1849 he moved to Mill Creek in Salt Lake County, then to South Creek, afterwards named Draper. When he arrived in South Willow Creek, there were only five families living there, and the water was so scarce they were afraid there would not be enough to divide with Perry, but somehow they managed, and in order to conserve the water, they would go in wagons to the mouth of the canyon where the stream was larger, and do their washings and water their horses. As the water left the canyon it soaked into the ground, and by the time it reached the valley there was a very small stream. Perry built a three room log cabin on the banks of the main creek. He resided in Draper until his death.

Brother Fitzgerald went through all the trials and hardships of early pioneer life in Utah, with the crickets and grasshoppers, and the Indian depredations.

He was very enthusiastic in the promotion of education in an early pioneer day at Draper. He and his wife Ann Wilson, organized the Second Sunday School in Utah at Draper. He was a ward teacher for thirty years, and he was ever faithful in discharge of his duties as a Latter-day Saint, being scrupulously honest in all his dealings. It was truthfully said of him that he never turned a person from his door without administering to his wants.

His first wife was Mary Ann Cosat, a native of Kentucky. She died in Utah in April 1851. She was the mother of five children. He subsequently married two other wives. By his three wives Brother Fitzgerald was the father of twenty children - twelve sons, and eight daughters.

Brother Fitzgerald died October 4th 1889, after a lingering illness of three and a half years. During the last eighteen months of his life, he was confined to his bed with Bright's disease of the kidneys. He was seventy-four years, ten months and thirteen days old when he passed away.

At the time of his death, he had fifty grand children, forty-two of whom were living, and eight great grandchildren, all members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At a reunion of the Perry Fitzgerald family held June 1, 1914, two hundred and ten direct descendants were accounted for.