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Biographical Sketch

of

Jonathan Steggell

by Ruby T. Brown Clayson, his granddaughter

Pioneer Year 1861

Sailed on the Fleetwing
Homer Duncan Company

Born 15 Dec 1833 at Kirton, Suffolk, England

Married Elizabeth Jane Bennett 11 Aug 1856 at Devenport,

Devonshire, England

Died 11 Feb 1885 at American Fork, Utah

Jonathan Steggell, son of John Steggell and Mary Franks, was born December 15th, 1833, at the village of Kirton, Suffolk County, England.

His father died in 1840, leaving his Mother with four small children: John, Isabelle, Jonathan and James.

When nine years old Jonathan was taken into a gentleman's house as a servant boy. Later while still a small boy, he was put aboard his Uncle's ship, the Paragon of Ipswich, as Cabin Boy, with the understanding that he should receive an education under the direction of the Captain. He made good his promise, for the boy became a good reader and speller, a beautiful penman, an excellent mathematician, could write shorthand, and thoroughly understood navigation.

According to his own record, his first voyage was made to Mauritius and Calcutta, India; thence to the Cove of Cork, Ireland for orders; thence to Bristol, England, Newport, Wales, Saint Thomas and Trinidad, West Indies; thence to London. He then made four successive voyages on the Paragon to Mauritius, East Indies; thence to London. He then left the Paragon and joined the Mary Ann of Ipswich for Saint Michalls, Azores. Was left in the Hospital. Returned to London in the Arab of Jersey. Shipped on board the Lyme Regis of Lyme Regis, for San Francisco, California; thence to Valpariso, Chile; then to Tome Conception Bay, Chile; thence to San Francisco; Calao and Chinchu, Peru; thence to Falmouth for orders.

Left the Lyme Regis, joined her Majesty's Navy to fight for his Native Land, against Russia. Was at first a super nunnery on board the Nautilus, (16 guns). Transferred to the Impregnable Plymouth (21 guns); then to the Vigo (74 guns); then the James Watt in 1895 (91 guns). Blockaded the Russian Fort to the Gulf of Finland and Bothnia. Was at the bombardment and taking of Boomersund. Visited most of the ports in the Baltic Sea, and returned to England to winter at Portsmouth. Sent on board the Blande (36 guns). Assisted in fitting out the Gorgon (6 guns), then went to the Camperdown (121 guns). Refitted the James Watt; Obtained leave one month and visited my relatives at Kirton. Returned to London short on board the Crockidile

(21 guns). Thence to Portsmouth on board the Victory; thence to Camperdown.

Heard the Gospel. Believed no one on board qualified to baptize me. Now went on board the James Watt again, blockading as before. Bombarded Sweaborg. Returned in the fall to Plymouth. Was baptized December 1855, age 22 years, by Elder Stockdale.

Sent on board the Vengeance (84) guns; thence to the James Watt. Was at the Grand Review, Spitshead, 1856. Thence to the Centuriah (84 guns). Proceeded to Gibrato-Mata, Constantinople-Sabastopol. Returning by Constantinople-Malta-Gibrato-Cadiz-Spain-Portsmouth, thence to Plymouth. Was at the Review at Plymouth Sound same year. Back again to James Watt; refitted Channel Cruising. Visited Lisbon, Portugal twice. Returned to Plymouth. Dismantled. Paid off short time previous.

This was the Crimean War he fought in; the war between England and Russia 1854-1855. He received a medal for breaking the English record of rapid cannon shooting at the bombardment of Sweaborg. Should also have received a second medal, but left England before they were awarded.

Eleventh of August 1856, he married Elizabeth Jane Bennett at Devenport, Devonshire, England. She was a sister to Susan Bennett Houston.

He then fitted the Star of the North at Catdown. Went to Southampton; joined the R.M.S. Ship Orinoco as Second Master. Made six successive voyages to Saint Thomas, West Indies. On the first voyage thirty died in fourteen days; 70 sick at one time.

Jonathan B. Steggell, first son was born at Plymouth May, 1857. Died July 1857. Jonathan Frank Steggell, second son, was born at Southampton, November 1858. Died March 1859. Eliza Jane, his wife, died August 29th, 1859, at Southampton. She was a beautiful young woman; very intellectual; an expert seamstress; a devoted wife and a loving mother. We have a poem she composed at the death of one of her babies, which reveals her wonderful character. Though she grieved sorely for her children, yet she acknowledged the Hand of

God in their death. She was a faithful Latter-day Saint, and her most cherished hope was that she might have come to Zion.

He then helped fit out the Prince Trent Paramatta and many other West India mail ships. Joined Tagus P. and O. Ship. Made voyages to Vigo, Sporto and Lisbon. Left and joined Bohar P. and O. Ships. On voyages to same places. Left and joined Great Eastern six weeks. Left and joined sailing ship, Ledgemoor bound for Port Elizabeth, Cape of Good Hope. Joined the ship, Fleetwing, for Philadelphia. Went by rail to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; thence to Florence, Nebraska. Crossed the Plains in Homer Duncan's Train in 1861, to Utah.

In his own words, "I have been nearly starved to death at sea, nearly drowned many times, faced death a great many times, and am alive now by the Providence of Almighty God. For Which I am thankful. I hope I shall always merit his favor."

While on one of his voyages at sea, they were shipwrecked and hungry. Their provisions and water were both exhausted. They became so hungry that they chewed the wood on the boat. Some of them almost chewed the ends of their fingers off. Many of them jumped overboard. The agonies of hunger and thirst were so terrible that they became almost men insane. Some of them held counsel to determine what should be done. In their last moments of despair they decided to kill one of the crew that their appetites might be appeased. My Grandfather was not included in the consultation but he overheard their plans. He was the youngest and fleshiest of the crew. And imagine to his horror when he overheard their plans and he had been chosen as the one to be killed and eaten by his comrades. He climbed to the topmost part of the ship to try to escape them. It seemed that the Hand of Lord was over him, for in due time he saved his life. Another ship was cited and relief was obtained.

At one time he was at sea and spent one and one half years without ever setting foot on land.

His first son was born while he was at sea and died and was buried before his return. When he used to tell about this, the tears would course down his cheeks.

After coming to Utah in 1861, he worked at anything he could get to do till 1866. During this period of his life he was helping to lift a wagon and hurt himself, which resulted in a long and serious illness. It might have proven fatal had not an unseen power again been protecting and guiding his future destiny.

He had not relatives in America. His wife and children having died before he came to this country, and his mother and other relatives were still in England. He became so ill that he could not move either hand or foot. He begged the people to carry him out of the old fort wall and let him die. Charles Greene said to him, "Why Jonathan, you shall get well and yet have wives." My grandfather had no faith in this prophecy at the time but he lived to see its fulfillment. Mr. Greene bathed him, dressed his bedsores, and did all that loving hands could do, and then Brother John B. Kelley and his good wife took him to their home and cared for him.

When he became sufficiently well that he could walk, by the assistance of crutches, he started for Salt Lake City. He had not a penny but he met Brother Thomas Barratt and he gave him fifty cents. Some kind friend gave him a ride to Salt Lake City. On his arrival, he met President Brigham Young, who, when he saw his weak condition, said: "Brother Jonathan, I call you on a mission to England. The Salt Sea air will do you good."

President Young made certain promises to him at this time; the details of which we do not know. But he was blessed sufficiently that he left his crutches behind when he started for England. He was very weak in body and had no money, but in his heart was a love for the Gospel of Christ and confidence in his Servants and an all-abiding faith in God. We have no record of how he made the journey from Utah to England, but he was in the service of the Lord and he must have provided for him as he did for all His faithful servants in those trying times.

The 25th of July 1866, he was assigned to labor in the Leeds Conference under the direction of Elder John Barker. March 21, 1867, he was appointed to preside over the Liverpool Conference. He visited with his dear mother and other relatives. While their joy at

seeing him was beyond description, he was unable to convert them to the Gospel. He fulfilled an honorable mission and returned to Utah, August 1868 in good health.

While in Liverpool, he met Mary Ann Smith, to whom he became engaged. She returned to Utah with him. They crossed the Ocean in the "Minnesota," the first steam ship that brought Mormon passengers to America.

At Chicago, they took the train. They with the other Emigrants were crowded into cars, which had stood for months in the hot sun with all windows screwed down; this was July. Two screwdrivers were left in each car to unscrew the windows. The men used these quickly as they could, but the people were so overcome with heat and foul air that they finally broke the glass of the windows with their fists. Eight died in two days overcome with the heat. My grandfather was very ill and they thought him dead. Three times they came to take him out. The third time they were determined to take him, but Grandmother was very insistent that he was not dead. For thirty-six hours she stood fanning him and bathing his head with cold water. She perspired till the perspiration dripped from her clothing like rain. Finally he revived and opened his eyes. Her love and faith had won. Some of the people worked with their loved ones till they died themselves from the heat and exhaustion.

They were three weeks crossing the Plains. While they had many hardships to endure, yet they were young and in their love for each other they were very happy. One evening while on the Plains, the Assistant Captain of the train behind theirs drove up to their Captain and asked him to stop his train as the Indians had stampeded their cattle. This Company was harassed by the Indians but the Company my Grandfather and Grandmother came in did not see an Indian until they reached Echo Canyon.

However, when they came to a small canyon called "Whiskey Gap," the Captain said instead of going through this canyon they have to go around the mountain a distance of one hundred miles because as each wagon came through the gap, the Indians could cut it off. After they made the distance around the mountain to where they

could see, the Captain drew their attention, and as they looked, they saw the whole side of the mountain on fire, but they were safe. The Indians had waited for them and when they found they had been tricked and cheated they were very angry.

As they came down the hill to the tree crossings of the Sweetwater, Nephi and Joseph Elsmore and another young man, the only son of a widowed mother, headed the Company and came to the river first and took a swim. In a few minutes the crowd was frantic. The young man had been sucked into a whirlpool and drowned. They camped there that night and next day tried very hard to secure his body, but their efforts were all in vain. It was never found and his poor mother was left alone. It rained all night. Oh, such a terrible rain. Their wagon covers were like sieves and their beds were drenched.

They arrived in Salt Lake City, the 21st of August 1868 and were married in the Endowment House the following day. The 17th of May 1869, he married Isabelle Davis, whom he had also met while on his Mission in England. They first settled in Salt Lake City and Grandfather worked at a sawmill in one of the canyons. Afterwards they lived at Kaysville for a time, and he worked on the railroad in Echo Canyon. About 1869 or 1870, they moved to American Fork, where he resided the remainder of his life. When they first moved to American Fork, he worked at farming or other work he could get to do. Later he worked in the Co-op Store, having charge of the butcher shop of that institution. He remained at the Co-op until his death.

He was a very industrious and hard working man and took great pleasure in beautifying his surroundings. He was great lover of flowers, and was also a great admirer of animals, especially horses. He was a man thoroughly converted to the Gospel. Always paid an honest tithing and sincerely believed in each principal and ordinance of the Gospel, having great faith in the power of the Priesthood and in his Heavenly Father.

He died at American Fork, the 11th of February 1885.

He was survived by his two widows, Mary Ann Smith and Isabelle Davis, and the following children survived him: Jonathan F.

Elizabeth R. John Williams, and Alexander H. – children of Mary Ann Smith Henry P., James Edward, Josephine, Sarah Cleopatra, and George H – children of Isabelle Davis; two sons of Isabelle Davis having preceded him in death (Joseph Hyrum and Samuel) Also preceding him in death were his first wife, Elizabeth Jane Bennett, and her two sons; Jonathan B. and Jonathan Frank.

- Written by Ruby Wray Thornton Brown Clayson.