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Biographical Sketch

of

Richard Reese Steele

by Ivy G. Stelle, his daughter-in-law

Native Pioneer Year 1854

Born 12 Feb 1854

Married Alice Mitchell 7 Aug 1877

Died 23 May 1933

Richard Reese Steele was the third son and the fourth child of Richard and Mary Ann Reese Steele. His parents had heard the gospel preached by the elders in England and had believed its message. They left their home, relatives, and friends, joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and endured many privations and hardships to be united with the body of the Saints at Nauvoo.

While they were in Nauvoo they were troubled by the mobs as were also the others who remained there. Taking their little son, Thomas Grafton, they decided to go farther West. They moved to Walnut Grove where they remained for five years. Conditions were very unsatisfactory so in June, 1851, the family, which now consisted of the father, mother, and two children, Thomas Grafton and Moses Beckett, decided to move to Salt Lake in company with other emigrants.

The weather was hot, the roads were poor, the hardships were many, but they kept bravely on. On the evening of Aug. 10th, while the company was camped at Ash Grove, a baby daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was born. The next morning they continued their journey.

They reached Salt Lake City in October, 1851, and moved to American Fork in April, 1852. Here on February 12, 1854, Richard Reese Steele was born. His other brothers and sister born after the family settled in American Fork were William Henry, George Edward, and Sarah Ann.

Living under pioneer conditions such as existed at that time, Richard learned to work when he was very young and worked hard practically all his life. As a small boy he was sent up the creek to herd cows and often told the following incident: "One day when he was herding the cows Indians came and took his lunch away from him. After they had eaten it, they threw the crumbs in his face. So that day he had no lunch.

His boyhood was spent much like that of other pioneer boys. He attended the town school only a short time out of each year. Brother Henroid was one of his teachers. He helped on the farm,

tended to the cattle and sheep, and helped about his father's store. He learned the value of honesty, patience, kindness, and co-operation.

Although there was plenty of work, there were parties and other forms of simple wholesome amusement which relieved the monotony and made for a well rounded life. So the boy grew into manhood and assumed its responsibilities.

On Aug. 7, 1877, Richard married Alice Mitchell, daughter of George & Anne Mitchell. They lived with his parents until after the birth of their first son, George R. Steele. They then moved to the old Steele home which stood on the site formerly occupied by the Bonneville Lumber Co. Here the second son, Roy, was born.

Soon after this the family moved up to the homestead north of town, which place has since been the family home. Here a daughter, Annie, and another son, Moral D., were born. They then moved to the Mill where Richard acted as assistant miller. He worked in the Chipman Mill in this capacity and as head miller for twelve years, proving himself an efficient and a trustworthy workman.

He was interested in developing the mines in American Fork Canyon and worked several claims up there. He helped build the railroad to the Canyon and was one of the first brakemen on this road. He also was one of the first brakemen on the railroad which went to Bingham Canyon. He secured a tract of land on the East bench and engaged in farming and stock-raising. This was the first ground homesteaded in that locality. He owned and cultivated this land until it was purchased by the state & became part of the State Training school.

At the time of his death he was the second oldest native born citizen of American Fork. He was the father of nine children, three of whom, Leonard, Annie and one child who died in infancy, have preceded him in death. Surviving him are his wife, the following children: George, Roy, Moral, Nellie, Alfred and Fay. There are also twenty grand children, nine great gran children, and one sister, Sarah A. Shelley.

He was essentially a home and a family man. He sought no honors or positions, being of a friendly but retiring disposition. He

was a thoughtful, kind, and loving husband and father whose greatest desire was to make his children happy. He saw from afar their wants and needs and did all he could to supply them. He and Aunt Alice would gladly give the last thing they owned rather than see their children want for anything. They are admired and loved by their sons and daughter.

To his friends and neighbors he was kind, obliging, and helpful. To those in need or to the sick he was always ready to do what he could to help them. He was never too poor to share what he had to others. In a quiet, unostentatious way he gave many bushels of potatoes, other vegetables, and pieces of meat to those who were in need.

Richard R. Steele passed to the Great Beyond for his reward in a quiet, peaceful way, surrounded by loved ones May 23rd, 1933.