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Biographical Sketch

of

George Rowley

Ann Brown Rowley

by Pearl R. Cunningham, granddaughter

Pioneer Year 1855, 1859

Sailed on the Ellen Marie

Born 20 Sep 1827 of Thornhill, Yorkshire, England

Married Ann Brown in England

Died Feb 1908

George Rowley was born September 20, 1827, the son of Richard and Rachael Oaks Rowley of Thornhill, Yorkshire, England.

He joined the L.D.S. Church and was baptized in 1847, at the age of twenty.

His sister, Ann, did not join the Church but was married to Thomas Etchells. She had a daughter, Caroline Alice, who lives in Bedford, England.

George was married to Ann Brown, daughter of John Brown and Mary Hampshire; [she was] born near Huddersfield, Yorkshire, England on March 22, 1828. She joined the Church in 1844.

After they were married they did a great deal of missionary work. They distributed tracts for five years, and, as she writes, "Were mistreated for the Gospel's sake, but the Lord's work prospered regardless of the work of the Devil." They were instrumental in bringing her father and mother into the Church.

George and Wife were the parents of three sons and a small daughter. The little girl fell from the high chair on to the stove and was fatally burned. She was buried the day before George was scheduled to come to America.

The three sons were William Brown Rowley, Joseph Smith Rowley, and Alma Rowley. All three belong to the church and have large families.

After joining the Church, George and wife both had the desire to come to America and on December 18, 1854 he had the opportunity of working his way across the Ocean but was not permitted to take his family. They hated to be separated, especially when their little daughter had been buried the day before, but they knew this was the Gospel of Christ and that God would protect them and make it possible for the family to follow.

He left Huddersfield in a rainstorm. The next day, in Liverpool, he went in a tugboat out to the ship which was to carry them across. It was an American ship.

On Dec. 20, after all luggage was on board, a vessel ran into the ship and damaged it, causing a delay until Jan. 17. Finally, they took

the ship "Ellen Marie." He was very lonesome and worried about his wife and family. It was his duty to give out provisions to the saints and to help the sailors when needed.

George Rowley was an excellent singer and President Balentine put him in charge of the singing on the ship. He organized a choir, which did a great of singing during the journey.

Brother F. D. Richards was one of the leaders of the Saints and during that trip many prayers were answered and miraculous things happened. A Brother arose in a meeting on Feb. 1st and related a dream. He said he saw an angel come down from heaven in company with another person and he heard the Angel say it was a pity the way the Saints on this ship had been dealt with (8 days tossed about and no progress) but he promised three weeks of fine weather. Two days later the fine weather began and the promise was fulfilled.

Another time a lady kept repeating that she had had a dream and that her small boy had fallen into the ocean; night after night the dream was repeated until all became alarmed and watched every move the child made; then one day the Father had hold of the child's hand out on deck. George Rowley stood a few feet away and saw the accident happen. The wind had left the sail and the boy took hold of the rope; when the sail filled again the boy was jerked into the ocean before a soul could help. They tried to find him but the sea was heavy and he was not found.

Their Motto was, "To Zion we must go – And Will go."

George Rowley reached New Orleans at 4 o'clock, March 14, 1855, with one cent in his pocket and very homesick for his family. Israel Tillitson took him to his brother's home where he stayed five weeks. He got work driving a team for one month and then worked in Jackson's foundry, on the corner of Main and Biddle, St. Louis. He then received council to go to the valley.

On Tuesday, July 24th at 4 o'clock in the evening he started for Atchison, 532 miles above St. Louis and in Kansas Territory. He landed there July 28th.

On August 5th, he drew out the first wagon for Salt Lake as far as Mormon Grave. They passed through Ash Hollow just after the Shawnee Indians and the U. S. Army (General Harvey and his men) had the battle where all were killed. George Rowley and the saints in the Company slept all night on their rifles. They reached Fort Bridger on the 8th of Nov. This was 110 miles from Salt Lake City. The snow was 18 inches deep but they went on and on, reaching the valley Nov. 16, 1855.

He spent two years working, singing, preaching and praying that his dear wife and family might be brought to his side.

On April 23, 1857 he was chosen as one of the Missionaries from Utah to Europe.

On Thursday morning at 8 o'clock the Handcart Missionaries assembled on Temple block, to receive their licenses at the hand of Orson Hyde. Here they were addressed by Orson Hyde, Lorenzo Snow, Wilford Woodruff and elder Clinton. The Presidency then arrived and desired the citizens to return home. The missionaries started at 19 o'clock, headed by the Nauvoo Band playing one of their lively airs. There were 26 Handcarts and about 70 men. Thousands of the Brethren and sisters accompanied them out of the city on to the bench. Some pulling the cars for the Missionaries up the first hill.

Many bade farewell and then organized themselves, with Henry Harriman President, L. W. Goddard and J. W. Young as Counselors. W. H. Peranch (or Perauch) was chosen Captain.

The trip was a stormy one. Mud, wind and cold was as much as any man could bear.

On May 18th, they saw Porter Rockwell and Benjamin Neff. Stayed all day at their camp and mended broken axletrees, made bread, washed and got everything ready to go on.

On May 19th a storm came up which made the stoutest hearts to fear. It thundered, lighteninged [sic] and torrents of rain came down for two hours. All were wet.

Brigham H. Young was appointed Captain of the Guard in place of John Y. Green, who resigned to drive a herd of horses to the

states and to receive instruction about getting more supplies at Fort Torania.

By June the 8th their provisions were low and all were tired and hungry. They were finally met by some Mormons with Wagons and taken into a Mormon Settlement on Beaver River. They were given plenty to eat and they knelt down and thanked God.

They reached Florence at sunrise June 9th, having been 48 days on the way (an average of 12 ½ miles per day). They heard the news of Parley P. Pratt being murdered.

They called an auction to see their cars and on Jan. 13th (Friday) George Rowley sold his cart for \$5.00 He then got into a boat with Moses Greenwood, George Steneraforth and J. Y. Pinder and went up the Missouri River.

Aug. 15, 1857 George Rowley, Jabe Taylor and John Y. Pinder, as missionaries from Utah to Europe prepared to sail in the ship "Philadelphia."

George writes in his diary: "I bear my testimony before all men, that Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimble are good men; men of God, who are spending their whole lives for the cause of truth and righteousness and for the building up of the Kingdom of God on the earth."

Elders George Rowley and John Pinder were appointed to labor in Wales. Notes regarding the passage stated "These Brethern are in Good health and spirits after a passage of 30 days."

George was permitted to have a brief visit with his dear wife and family. She had been working, sewing dresses and rugs or washing, etc. to put money into the emigration fund so she and her family could go to her husband in Zion.

After he had labored in Wales a few months she and the children joined him.

It was while in Wales that her cripple son, Joseph, was made well.

George was called back home to Utah in 1859. They left Liverpool, England April 11, 1859 on the ship "William Tapscecott." Elder Robert F. Nelson was President of the company with Henry Harris and George Rowley, counselors. They were 8 weeks on the water. He nearly lost his wife while crossing. A new baby was born, but died and was buried in the sea.

When they arrived in New York, they went on cars to Hemalp. George was called to be the Captain of the Handcart Company. There were 57 Handcarts, 235 souls, with very little provisions. They were allowed 1 lb. of flour each day and some of the children could eat 2 lbs. each.

George Rowley's three boys walked most of the way. The youngest, Alma, was only six years old. There were old people 70 years old in the Company. Shoes gave out and they had to tie rags on their feet. Through all the trials, the ever-abiding faith of George and wife made them say, "The Lord did bless us."

They were three months crossing the plains; the members of the Company had poor clothing and scant provisions, but they were joyous and jubilant. Some were very good singers and their prompt, energetic actions and uniform movements manifested a vivacity and life which comforted them very much, according to the men sent out by Brigham Young to meet them.

After they arrived in Salt Lake City, someone of the Company put in a complaint against Captain Rowley for unfair supervision. This hurt him very much. A meeting was held by authorities and an investigation proved that Captain George Rowley was a very capable and true Captain. He was hired by President Young to work in the woolen mills, he being a wool spinner.

In January, 1860, George Rowley married a second wife, Sarah Tuffley. His first wife, Ann Brown, said they lived in the same house many years and were poor but very happy.

For some reason George moved his family to American Fork, Utah and on Feb. 11, 1861 a daughter was born by the second wife. She was named Sarah Ann. She now lives in Salt Lake City. Her name is Mrs. Sarah Ann Wagstaff.

Soon President Young sent for George to come back in the factory to work, and he went. His family stayed in American Fork.

The place where he worked was damp and he had neuralgia in his head. In a very short time he went blind with the pain.

A more happy, loving, God-fearing man never walked.

In 1872 his second wife (Sarah Tuffley) died, leaving Sarah Ann in the care of the first wife. There was perfect love and harmony in the family.

In 1871 George was made Organist of the Rowley Concert Co. Joseph Kirkham played 1st Violin; James Kirkham, 2nd Violin; James Gledhill, 3rd Violin; Hyrum Kirkham, Piccolo; George Kirkham, Banjo; and John Broadbent, the Concertina. They were know up; and down the state for their entertainment and traveled a great deal. They became sort of a traveling troop, adding views and lectures to the music. At one time George, with Brother Kirkham, traveled 347 miles.

Even though George was blind, he was so cheerful and interesting, every one loved him.

He played the Organ in Church many, many times and had a beautiful voice. His favorite song was "Love at Home." It came from his heart for there was love at home, and beauty all around him. The Gospel brought beauty and contentment to him.

His wife, Ann Brown, died in 1905 in American Fork, and his daughter took care of him until his death Feb. 1908. He had been blind forty years.

At the time of his death he had two sons and one daughter living, also 26 Grandchildren and 22 Great Grandchildren.

He was loved by all who knew him.