

Life Story of Francis Astle

Written by his granddaughter, Sarah Astle Call



Francis Astle

Francis was the son of James Astle and Rachel King. He was born 2 February 1810 at Diesworth, Leicestershire, England. His wife, Felicia Raynor, was born at Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, England, 4 May 1814. His parents had lived, at least for a time, at Chellaston, Derbyshire, England.

In early manhood, he, with others of his family, moved to Nottinghamshire to work in the Lace Mills where he became an expert workman in this trade. In this Shire, he met and married Felicia Raynor. To them were born one daughter and four sons.

Francis was a calm, dignified, and very intelligent man with a fine personality. He had a good voice for singing and at an early age, he was a member of the famous “Boys Choir” of England. He had received a liberal education for those times. His writing and spelling of the

English language were almost perfect as substantiated by a diary kept by him. It is now in our possession and will be included in this writing.

He was born of a lineage that connects with those of a very ancient origin and honorable ancestry and had possessed great love for his family especially his sons and only daughter, Mary. His one great desire was to keep them near their Father and Mother that they might be taught the true meaning of life and to become useful to the world and to their own families. Being a religious man, he was anxious to know more about God and what church he should join.

Sometime before 1850, he and his wife met the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sometimes called Mormons. Their message appealed to him. Through sincere investigation and prayer, a testimony of its truthfulness was given to him by the Lord. His baptism took place in September 1850 and from that very time, his main desire was to immigrate to America and live with the Saints in Utah. His wife delayed a little longer, but she, too, was baptized the same year, 1850.

It may be well to say something about this lovable little wife, Felicia Raynor. She was small of stature and an unusually beautiful girl in every way. Although it is a little ahead of our story, right here may be a good place to tell a little incident that was related to us by our parents.

As soon as Grandfather had joined the church, he began saving money for the “emigration fees” for crossing the ocean and going to Utah. The family income was kept by the budget system and Grandmother was given a certain amount for household needs and care of the family. More than once she remarked that she was not going to America. This caused her husband to wonder and to worry to some extent. One day Grandfather was counting his saving and remarked that he still lacked a certain amount for the voyage. Quietly Grandmother went into an adjoining room. She returned with a small bag in her hand. Grandfather wondered why, and was he surprised when she laid before him the exact amount he needed.



Felicia Raynor

As stated previously, Grandmother was a beautiful woman. In 1900-1902, her son John was filling a mission for the Church in the old home city of Nottingham, and in 1901 John’s son William was also transferred to the same Conference. William told one incident that happened when he met a lady who knew our grandparents. When she learned that he was a grandson of Francis Astle, she said, “And a grandson of that beautiful Felicia Raynor.” Felicia Raynor was also a very neat and orderly person. Someone asked her why she scrubbed her floor every day. Her reply was, “To make room for more dirt.”

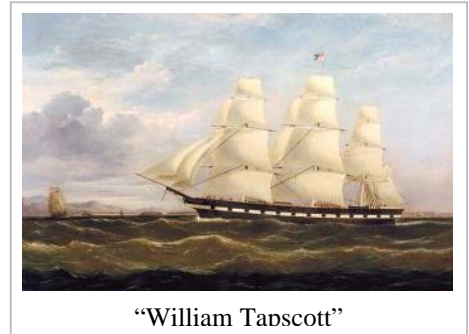
Now they were financially ready to leave England for America. Immediately they began preparations for the journey for which they had so long wished, planned, and anticipated. We have Grandfather’s diary, as before mentioned in our possession, that he kept daily from the very day they left their home in Hucknall, Nottingham, England. There must have been many fond memories and the association of loved ones, of life-long neighbors and friends, and all the scenes of their beloved city and nation, that almost rent their very heart strings, knowing that, without doubt, they would never see this home and surroundings again. It must have been like uprooting a tree from its long-established soil to leave all familiar things and go to live in an almost unknown place which was virtually a wilderness. Little could they imagine what was before them in this complete change of life.

However, their faith was secure in the fact that they had become members of the true church as God intended for those in whose veins, like theirs, flowed the blood of Israel. And, as Christ said, “When my sheep hear my voice, they know the Shepherd.”

The “farewells” were over, and on Monday, the seventh of May, 1860, they began the trip from Nottingham to Liverpool, England. From here, they were to set sail for America in the sailing vessel “William Tapscott”.

The following is taken from Grandfather’s diary:
Monday, 7 May – Arrived at Liverpool in the afternoon, three o’clock.

Tuesday, 8 May – Went on board, myself and wife, Thomas, James, John, Joseph, about eleven o’clock. The steam tug brought us to the sailing vessel. The tug had no fears of the water nor



“William Tapscott”

anything else. There is plenty else to do. Today I got completely lost in the ship. My wife and John came to find me. We got our own berth just in time. Went on the shelves (bunks) for the first time tonight. Got a good night’s rest. James went back with the steam tug to buy us a few more things we wanted. He came back next day all safe and we received our provisions.

Wednesday, 9 May – Received our provisions. There are 730 Saints on board. There are over 800 passengers; altogether about 100 who are not Saints.

Thursday, 10 May – The Government Inspector came on board to inspect the ship, and a doctor to inspect the passengers according to law.

Friday, 11 May – We are very busy today, lashing our boxes, making ready to sail. The Frig came and we began to sail about two o’clock. The Saints were organized into a Conference and divided into ten wards, each ward having prayers night and morning. We are in the fourth ward.

Saturday, 12 May – Many are beginning to be sick this morning. A strong head wind. The steamer is still with us. Afternoon, a rough sea and head wind. The steamer continues with us. The people are getting very sick. They lie and sit in all directions with their heads in their hands, some falling down with giddiness; James has been very sick all day. The steamer left us about ten o’clock tonight. The wind has changed more in our favor. The people could not attend prayers in our ward tonight.

Sunday, 13 May – The wind still continues in our favor with a heavy sea. It has been very cold ever since we have been on board. The people are very sick this morning. Afternoon, sea quite calm. James continues sick but is rather better this afternoon. Joseph and I had to go on watch tonight. Held prayers tonight, and Brother Budge proposed that Brother MacComie should pray for the wind to change in our favor. He did and the Lord heard our prayers.

Monday, 14 May – The people are somewhat better this morning. Afternoon, a heavy sea, a strong wind, people very sick. Myself and James very ill, indeed, John and Joseph don't feel well. Felicia the stoutest of us all. 'Tis very cold.

Tuesday, 15 May – We had a very rough night and it still continues rough this morning, the sea rolling mountains high, the people extra-ordinarily sick. James continues sick. The rest of us not very well today, except Felicia. She enjoys health here as well as at home. 'Tis very cold. The toasted bread went moldy.

Wednesday, 16 May – The people are somewhat better today, except that we have not much appetite to eat, except Joseph; he does not fail. 'Tis very cold and wet this afternoon. It has been wet almost every day.

Thursday, 17 May – Had a rough night of it. The wind has changed, but still continues rough this morning, and cold and wet. This afternoon our people seem generally better from sickness. Had to throw the toasted bread away. James continues poorly.

Friday, 18 May – Wind more in our favor. Wind and sea very rough. It has broken loose the mid-top sail and the fore top sail. It makes the sailors very busy and the people very giddy. This is the best wind we have had. James is still poor this morning. Passed a vessel close by about two o'clock today, said to be the "Under-Writer". Also passed through a shoal of porpoise. Had a good day's sail, about 240 miles in twenty-four hours.

Saturday, 19 May – Sea very calm this morning. The people seem a great deal better this morning. Sailing pretty nearly south at six o'clock. At ten o'clock the wind changed and we are sailing more westward. Wet and cold this afternoon. There has been one Scandinavian wedding and two weddings of the British Mission on board. Very cold.

Sunday, 20 May – Sea calm. The people appear very much better this morning. Prayers were better attended. Meeting was held this afternoon on deck at half past two o'clock. The Saints were addressed by Elders Budge and Williams of the British Mission. We are 850 miles from Liverpool today at twelve o'clock. James and I are on watch during the meeting. Brother Widerburg addressed the Scandinavian Saints and the German Saints. Another meeting was held on deck at six tonight and was addressed by Elders Williams, Budge, Charles F. Jones, Widerburg, and others of the Scandinavians, Brother Widerburg speaking in the English language. The weather very favorable for us.

Monday, 21 May – A fair wind this morning. Sailing directly west. The Saints begin to enjoy the voyage. At twelve o'clock noon we are 995 miles from Liverpool.

Tuesday, 22 May – A fine morning, the sea pretty smooth. At twelve o'clock (noon) we are 1112 miles from Liverpool. A fine day, but rather cold this afternoon. The English Saints held a meeting at half past six o'clock and were addressed by Elders MacComie and Budge.

Wednesday, 23 May – We have a very wet day. Received our provisions today. A sailor and a boatswain had a fight; the first and second mates interfered and used the sailor most brutally. The cabin cook and carpenter had a fight this afternoon. It is very rough, indeed, tossing us about very much during the night, tin pans, bottles, boxes, etc. were rattling and flying in all directions. Beef today was very bad and according to what people say, most of it was thrown overboard.

Thursday, 24 May – The sea still continues rough, the waves rolling very high. Now we begin to see a little of a sailor's life. We not only see luggage and cooking utensils flying about, but we see breakfast and dinner doing the same thing; and the people falling and tumbling in all directions, but no serious accidents occurred. I know of the waves flying right over the vessel. This has been a terrible day, hats and caps flying into the sea.

Friday, 25 May – The storm has abated and we are now going along pretty smoothly. The people again seem to enjoy themselves. Dancing this afternoon on deck. James and I have to go on watch tonight. We have had a very fine day. Tonight they broke the fore-top yard arm.

Saturday, 26 May – This morning it is very wet and rough and cold. Afternoon turned fine. The English had dancing on deck after which the Scandinavians enjoyed themselves with a dance. Some few children began to be ill with measles. I was called up to assist in administering to four of them in our ward.

Sunday, 27 May – A fine morning and a fair wind. At 10 o'clock we are 1553 miles from Liverpool and 1562 miles from New York. While I am writing this the Germans and Swiss are holding a meeting in their ward, the weather having turned out wet since 12 o'clock, or they would have been on deck. The English held their meeting in their wards on account of the wet. Between 3 and 4 o'clock an old woman died. She was from Denmark, age eighty-four years. Her remains were committed to the "Deep" between 5 and 6 o'clock after a few remarks from Elders Budge and Widerburg. She embraced the Gospel seven years ago and was determined to gather with her daughter and son-in-law to Zion, or as far as the Lord would permit her to go. The children in the vessel still remain ill. The doctor called it Scarlatina.

Monday, 28 May – A fine morning, and we are sailing much better this afternoon. The weather is cold, the sea rough, many of the children are ill. A poor woman from Denmark died between one and two o'clock and was buried at half past four, aged thirty-five years. She left a husband and five children. The poor creature had been ill from Liverpool of sea sickness, could not eat anything; she became so weak that she sank under it. There was strange work today at the Cook Galley.

Tuesday, 29 May – This morning at six o'clock, the sea rough all day. A sailor very much abused by the first and second mates. Today we passed the Flemish Banks. Another woman confined of a son. She is a Scotch person. I understand the measles continue among the children. Had our dinner spoiled today by the cook.

Wednesday, 30 May – This morning 'tis very mild, no wind. Received our provisions today. It is somewhat better than last week, but no salt. The sea is quite calm, very little wind at all, 'till about eight o'clock, then the wind began to blow – a fair back-wind, the far most favorable wind we have had since we came on board. Tonight there was a child died belonging to the Scandinavians and was committed to the "Deep" about ten o'clock at night. It died of water in the brain.

Thursday, 31 May – The wind has continued in our favor all night and blows a steady gale this morning in the right direction, the best we have had since we set sail. We entered on the Banks of Newfoundland about two o'clock this afternoon. Much rejoicing rested on all the people for all had anxious desire to reach the Banks. At three o'clock we passed an English bark. It seemed very much tossed about.

Friday, 1 June – We had a very heavy shower of rain this morning about four o'clock. It tossed us about very much. The wind continues in our favor. From twelve o'clock yesterday we had sailed 204 miles, making us from New York 946 miles. This afternoon the wind is more calm, and we are not sailing so fast, yet we are sailing in the right direction. This being a fine day, the people were all ordered out on deck. I was put on watch in our ward, and there was a meeting on deck at half past six o'clock. I again was on watch. During this time the Scandinavians are beginning to be ill.

Saturday, 2 June – This morning not much wind and sea calm. More wind at twelve o'clock. Had sailed 45 miles since twelve o'clock yesterday. Now 901 miles from New York. This evening the Scandinavians had dancing on deck. We had preaching in our ward. Brother Budge attended.

Sunday, 3 June – This morning is fine after a good sail through the night. Have sailed since twelve o'clock yesterday, 131 miles. Twelve o'clock and we are 770 miles from New York. The small pox has broken out among the Scandinavians and seems to be increasing fast. At half past six there was a meeting on deck for the English Saints. Meeting was addressed by Elders Lowe, Charles F. Jones, and Brother Budge. The Scandinavians and Germans had their meeting this afternoon on deck.

Monday, 4 June – This morning, not making much time. The Captain is taking us out North to prevent disease that is spreading so fast this afternoon. They have partitioned off a portion of the ward for a hospital. Seven people have now fallen sick of small-pox.

There is scarcely any wind at all. There has just passed by the vessel a large quantity of porpoise or sea pigs, about half past four o'clock.

Tuesday, 5 June – At twelve o'clock today we are 635 miles from New York. At two o'clock a storm arose and the wind blew so strong the top mid mast pole broke. The vessel rocked to and fro like a drunken man and the fog arose so that we could no see many yards from the vessel.

Wednesday, 6 June – At twelve o'clock we are 520 miles from New York, still fog. The Captain sold some salt to us tonight – to the passengers at two and one-half cents per pound.

Thursday, 7 June – The fog still continues and it is very cold. This morning the Captain gave some potatoes to the passengers and sold some more fish at two and one-half cents per pound. Today at twelve o'clock we were 440 miles from New York. Another Scandinavian child died this morning. This makes six deaths. There have been five marriages and three births. This is the twenty-ninth day of the voyage. This afternoon the fog cleared for a while and we passed several vessels, some quite near. Several whales passed the vessel today.

Friday, 8 June – We got out of the fog about ten o'clock, but it remained cold. We are 360 miles from New York. The Captain has been very good to the sick, giving them soup, sago, arrow root, tea, and wine. No fresh cases of small-pox. The others are progressing favorably. I saw another shoal of porpoise. They came very near the vessel.

Saturday, 9 June – This morning we have fog again and it is very cold. The sailors are making preparation for landing. We are passing over St. George's Shoals. It is a very rainy morning. Twelve o'clock today we are 316 miles from New York. It continues very wet and cold indeed, and we cannot get out on deck. This has been a miserable day. No fresh cases of small pox have occurred. The others progressing favorably.

Sunday, 10 June – (thirty-first day of sail) This morning it is very rough and has been through the night, the waves rolling very high. We are now 235 miles from New York. The sea water is warm. The sea continues rough. The people are very anxious to land. Another case of small pox today.

Monday, 11 June – (thirty-two days of sailing) Very rough during the night. The third mate told me that the vessel pitched to heavy in the night that it threw him down. Last night has been the roughest time we have had since we came on board. Another child belonging to the Scandinavians died. This makes seven deaths, five children and two adults. There have been four births and five marriages.

Tuesday, 12 June – (33 days of sailing) This morning is very fine and warm, the warmest day we have had since we set sail. We received orders to clean out our berths and scour our tin vessels and make everything clean. The small-pox patients are progressing favorably.

We have very little wind and so cannot get along. We are now 180 miles from New York at twelve o'clock (noon).

Wednesday, 13 June – (34th day of sail) This morning is fine but considerably cooler than yesterday. We received our provisions today. There is quite a calm, and we are scarcely moving at all. Dancing on deck tonight by the Scandinavians. Six o'clock, the wind begins to blow a little. Eight o'clock, we have a nice gentle breeze.

Thursday, 14 June – (35th day of sail) This morning is fine. The crew is very busy cleaning the deck and vessel. At twelve o'clock (noon) we are now at Long Island. We are told it is 95 miles from New York. Sailing gently along. We had a meeting on deck tonight at half past six o'clock. Elder Calkins addressed us for the first time on our voyage, giving counsel to those who intend to cross the plains this season; also to all the Saints on board the ship, to clean themselves and their berths, that we may not be detained in quarantine when the Inspector comes on board.

Friday, 15 June – (36th day) This also is a fine morning and we are sailing gently along. A steam tug hove in sight about ten o'clock. The Captain of the ship Tapscott agree with the Captain of the tug to take in for \$200, and away we went and arrived a little before dark, or about seven and one-half o'clock. At night the doctor came on board and heard that the small pox was in the ship and said that he would come again. In the morning bread was brought on board and sold for six cents a loaf – from one and one-half pounds to two pounds.

Saturday, 16 June – This morning is fine and the doctor came and examined all on board, said he would come again before long. Accordingly he came about dinner time and said we must all be vaccinated, old and young. We went through the operation accordingly, and all who were inspected were sent to the hospital and there detained in quarantine to see if any more broke out. Another child died last night. It belonged to the Germans.

Sunday, 17 June – This is a fine morning. Brothers Budge, Calkins, Williams and their families went "ashore" today. Brother Budge and family returned at six o'clock tonight. A meeting was held on deck addressed by Elder Budge.

Monday, 18 June – This morning is very fine. The doctor came on board about ten o'clock and examined all. Again found no sick. Said we should be landed tomorrow. Another Scandinavian child died.

Tuesday, 19 June – This is a very fine morning. The folks are up between three and four o'clock, packing up their things, ready for going up to New York this morning. The doctor came again, said we should be landed that day. The people were anxiously waiting to go ashore. Very few had anything to eat. We continued in suspense of going ashore all day. In the evening Brother Budge came on board and told us he had been

very busy all the time making arrangements for our landing, but we could not land that night; but a steamer would be along side to Tapscott by six o'clock in the morning to take us away.

He also said he had purchased some bread, butter, and eggs to be sold to the Saints on board, and that some gentleman had given one sovereign worth of bread to be given to the people. Brother Budge also said that he and Brothers Calkins and Williams had been exerting all their power to get us away, and that the doctor had done much to affect this object. I believe great praise is due to the doctor in this respect. Our beds being all packed, we got the night through as best we could.

Wednesday, 20 June – This morning about seven o'clock a steamer came with a barge along side the Tapscott and we all began to haul our luggage to the barge. The Saints got on the steamer and moved away to New York. Arrived safely about twelve o'clock at Castle Gardens. There was at the Garden, Brother Croxall and brethren ready to receive us and give such instructions as were necessary for the present. Brother Croxall said he would see us again in the morning and thought he should be able to send us all away by the next day. We had been six weeks and two days on the sea.

Thursday, 21 June – This morning Brother Croxall and the Brethren made their appearance among us and began to give counsel to the Saints. He gave me and my family counsel to go to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and accordingly we set off in a steamer about five o'clock p.m. for that place and arrived there about four o'clock next morning.

Friday, 22 June – At four o'clock this morning we arrived safely in Philadelphia. There were Brethren at the wharf to receive us. They made every preparation necessary for us on our landing. In course of conversation, I found that Elder Edwin Spencer from Arnold, Nottingham, was living at Bodine Street about two doors below Oxford. Accordingly I and two of the Brethren set out for his house and found him. He said we should go and live at his house until we could get somewhere else to be. We went there and took our luggage. In the afternoon Elder Spencer and I went up to Germantown to try to get work.

We found Elder Henry George's home. He said he could find James, Joseph, and John work at Crowson next Monday morning.

And so the new life began in America for the family of Francis Astle, after a tedious sea voyage from Nottingham, England, the land of their birth. This was a new experience in every way of life. They had been told that America was a land of freedom. These teenage sons had assumed the idea that everything was theirs if they so desired it. A brief lesson came to them very soon after arrival in Philadelphia. One time while out walking, they saw some apples on the trees that looked very desirous. Well, they each helped themselves to the fruit. The owner

questioned them as to why they had taken the apples without permission. The boys answered, “Well, isn’t everything free in America?” This proved a timely lesson to them. They soon learned that whatever they possessed in America was to be earned by honesty and hard work the same as in the old home in England.

During this time Grandfather, Francis Astle, had the privilege of visiting his mother, Rachel King Astle, and his sisters, who were still living in either Lebanon or Clinton, New Jersey. They had immigrated to the United States prior to 1846. It was a joyous reunion for the family, although his father, James Astle, had died in 1846. This gave Grandfather the privilege of gathering some interesting data and genealogy of his immediate family that proved very valuable in later years.

For a little more than two years, they remained in Philadelphia. Grandfather and the sons were employed at the Knitting Mills in Germantown, Pennsylvania. Grandfather was an expert in the Lace Mills in Nottingham, England and easily adjusted to the work in Germantown.

Grandmother said it was a little difficult to do the shopping in America, especially for groceries, as some items were known by different names than in England. For instance, she went to a shop and asked for paprika. After much explanation, the clerk finally said, “Why you want cayenne pepper, do you not?” After this, she said to her family, “In America, when you want paprika, say cayenne pepper.”

In August or September, 1862, they decided to continue their journey to Utah. Grandfather and his three eldest sons had worked hard in the mills at Germantown and saved every dollar possible for the trip. The journey across the plains was made with ox teams, and although it was a slow traveling caravan, they arrived in Salt Lake City 13 September 1862. His family were members of the Joseph Horne Company.

They were sent on immediately to Hyrum, Cache County, Utah. This was a new community, just being organized and settled by immigrants from various foreign countries and of many different nationalities. Grandfather had been trained in the vocation of Lace Maker in the mills in Nottingham, England, but he found no employment in this training in the new country. But, they had come with a determination to work at whatever labor it required for them to live in the land of Zion, where they could worship as they desired, among the people of their choice, when they joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and left all former hopes and aspirations behind in their long-loved land, “England”, because they were sure they were right in joining this Church and coming to America. There were many hardships to be met and endured. They missed the comforts and what had seemed necessities in their former home. Here all was changed – a new land, unfamiliar surroundings, strange people. They soon rejoiced to find that the people were one in purpose, for they had the same faith and belief in their Heavenly Father.

Grandfather, having a liberal education for that time, became one of the first school teachers at Hyrum, Utah. A Mrs. Liljenquist, an early settler of Hyrum, said to Sarah Astle Call, "I knew your grandfather, Francis Astle, and family very well, and he was one of our very first school teachers in Hyrum." Mrs. Liljenquist was then living in the McKinley Ward, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He also worked at the business of mending shoes for the people and was know as both teacher and shoe cobbler. He did his work well.

In 1867 or 68, he and Grandmother decided to join two of their sons (Joseph and John) who had been called to help pioneer the Bear Lake Valley in Idaho, another new country. They were now getting along in years but had a desire for their family to live close to each other; so with the other two sons, James and Thomas, they made the trip with ox teams and very few possessions, over trails and dangerous roads to again begin life anew in a much colder climate and under more primitive conditions.

They all settled at Montpelier, Idaho, and entirely new place to everyone. They became farmers as that seemed about the only way of existing, by wrestling a living from the soil. The climate was extremely cold and more often than not the grain was frozen just before harvest time. Through all this, Grandmother, that beautiful, lovable person, remained at his side, never complaining or wishing they were back in England. She, too, was true to the faith that they had embraced. She was a very dainty, clean, and well bred little woman. Even in death, it was said of her, "A most beautiful woman." The last two years of her life were spent in bed, or a chair, with what was termed at that time, shaking palsy. She passed away 18 January 1884, age 70 years, at Montpelier, Idaho, and is buried there. Grandfather was very lonely after her death and lived alone except for a small grandson, James Astle, the son of his son James who had been killed by the kick of a horse. Grandfather lived only eleven months after Grandmother's death. He died 13 December 1884, age 74, at Montpelier, Idaho, and is buried there. A courageous and faithful life came to a close so far as this mortal existence is concerned, but in the hereafter his labors of usefulness will continue on among his ancestors who have gone before, and they will rejoice in his association.

Francis Astle & Felicia Raynor's Family

Children

Mary Astle

James Astle (first)

Born

16 March 1837

8 March 1839
(Died 13 February 1841)

Married

William Severn

James Astle (second)	18 March 1841	Elizabeth Bagley
Joseph Charles Astle	25 January 1844	Sarah Jane Denning
John Astle	16 June 1846	(first) Isabella Jane Bradshaw (second) Melvina Ann Banks
Francis Thomas Astle	1 November 1852	(first) Mercy Jane Campbell (second) Hannah Henson

All children were born in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, England

Side Note: His daughter, Mary Astle, left England for America in 1856 with her intended husband, William Severn. They were married on board the ship in mid-ocean. Both were converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and immigrated to Utah with the Hand Cart Company of 1856. They, too, had lived in Hyrum, Utah, and later moved to Montpelier, Idaho, as early settlers.