

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Family Group Sheet Prepared by Helen R. Gardner.....	1
William Rufus Rogers Stowell 1822-1901.....	2
MJGN:	3
Other Tidbits from William’s Life:.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Birth and Conversion	6
Divided Family	6
William’s Father, Augustus	6
The Spirit of Gathering	7
Nauvoo Temple Dream.....	8
The Prophet Joseph Smith	8
Life in Nauvoo	9
Patriarchal Blessing given by Hyrum Smith, Jan. 18, 1844	9
Gospel Political Missionary	9
Family Travels to Nauvoo	10
Vision of The Prophet Joseph Smith	11
Marriage.....	12
Preparing for Evacuation	12
Saints on The Move	13
Valiant Pioneer Women!.....	13
Garden Grove, Iowa.....	14
William’s Mother, Mary	14
Missourians	15
Iowa	16
John Taylor Prophecy	16
On the Plains	17
Hunting Buffalo	17
Entering the Great Salt Lake Valley 1850	18
Family Life	18

Military Service	19
Captain Stowell.....	19
The Indian War	20
Building Utah State Territory House in Fillmore	20
Sacrifice and Love	21
Miraculous Healing.....	21
Moving to Ogden	21
Testimony of Tithing	22
Plural Marriage	22
Utah War.....	23
Captain Stowell’s Dream of Survival	23
Captured and Taken Prisoner of the United States	24
Important Papers and Divine intervention	24
Charged with Treason Against the U.S. Government.....	25
Escape	26
Attempted Escape	26
Poisoning Thwarted by Divine Intervention.....	28
End of War--Release	29
Recovery and Prosperity	30
Church Work Summary	31
A Pluralist	31
Colonia Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico	32
Flour Mill.....	32
The Abundant Life.....	33
End of Life.....	33
Sources	35

Family Group Sheet Prepared by Helen R. Gardner

NAME <u>William Rufus Rogers STOWELL (farmer, cattle raiser)</u>		SEARCH NO. _____	ENCLOSURE NO. _____
Birth <u>28 Sept 1822</u> Place <u>Salon, Oneida, New York</u>		JURISDICTION _____	
Chr. _____	Place _____	VOL. _____ PAGE _____	
Mar. <u>9 Oct 1855</u>	Place <u>Salt Lake City, S.L., Utah</u> Place _____	DOCUMENT DATED _____	
Death <u>30 May 1901</u>	Colonia <u>Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico</u>	DOCUMENT RECORDED _____	
Burial _____	Place _____	CHECK SOURCE _____	DESCRIBE _____
Father <u>Augustus Oliver Artimus STOWELL</u>		CENSUS _____	CHURCH _____
Mother <u>Mary Stephens HOLMES</u>		CORRESPONDENCE _____	COURT _____
Note: This was the third marriage for both the husband and wife.		DEEDS _____	HISTORY _____
SPOUSE <u>Sophronia KELLEY</u>		HOME _____	INTERVIEW _____
Birth <u>22 July 1826</u>	Place <u>Patton, Lower Canada, Canada</u>	MILITARY _____	OBITUARY _____
Chr. _____	Place _____	TOMBSTONE _____	VITAL RECORDS _____
Death <u>24 Jan 1907</u>	Place <u>Franklin, Franklin, Idaho</u> Place <u>Franklin</u>	OTHER RECORDS _____	
Burial _____	Cemetery _____	LEGIBILITY	
Father <u>Alexander K7, ILL. Y</u>		____ Excellent ____ Good ____ Poor	
Mother <u>Mary Holmes DAVIS</u>		Original ____ Extract ____ Microfilm	
NOTES		Printed ____ Handwritten ____ Typed	
		Photo ____ Certified ____ Transcribed	
		Recorded copy	

SEX	CHILDREN	DAY MO. YEAR	CITY	COUNTY	STATE	SPOUSE
1.		B.12 Sep 1856	Bingham	Port	Weber Utah	Date 10 Feb 1873
F	Elvira STOWELL	D.19 Oct 1873				To Thomas WALLACE
2.		B.4 May 1858	Salt Lake City,	S.L.	Utah	Date
F	Mary STOWELL	D.17 Oct 1858				To
3	(twin)	B.28 July 1859	Ogden,	Weber,	Utah	Date 28 June 1873 EH
X	Martha Matilda STOWELL	D.3 Feb 1947				To Joseph John HILL
4.		B.28 July 1859	Ogden,	Weber,	Utah	Date 28 June 1873,
F	Maria STOWELL (twin)	D.23 Sep 1911				To Evan EVANS
5.		B.20 Oct 1861	Ogden,	Weber,	Utah	Date 17 Apr 1884
	David STOWELL	D.7 Dec 1939				To Ruth Ann BURCH
6.		B.25 Jan 1864	Ogden,	Weber,	Utah	Date 9 June 1886
	Alexander STOWELL	D.17 Aug 1941				To Ellen M. Dalton
7.		B.23 Nov 1866	Ogden,	Weber,	Utah	Date 23 Nov 1937
F	Mary Ann STOWELL	d. 25 Apr 1943				To Joseph JACKSON

William Rufus Rogers Stowell 1822-1901



Compiled by great-great granddaughter, Mary Jane Gardner Neville
Special thanks to my husband Joe, and daughter Andrea Issertell
for technical support, editing, pictures, and final copy. 2017

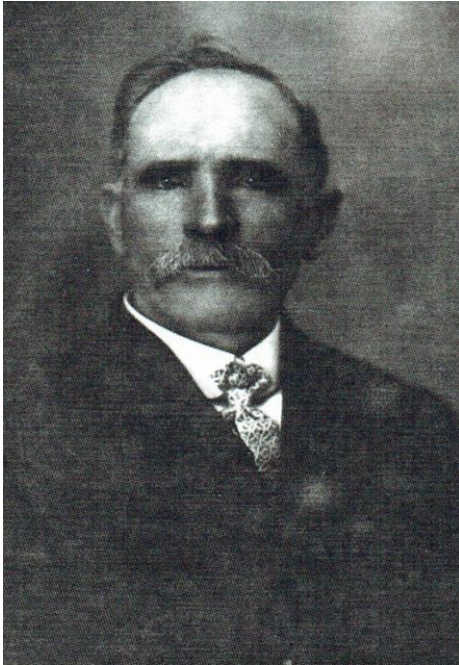
MJGN:

William is listed as being “a farmer and cattle raiser” which he was, but he was so much more. However, most importantly and above all, he was a man of God, faithfully building and defending the restored Kingdom of God on earth and sustaining the pioneer effort.

When writing this story, I realized that William R. R. Stowell and George Washington Hill were contemporaries. In many instances, their life experiences were similar and their whereabouts paralleled each other's. For example:

- They were born in the same year.
- They both took charge of bringing their mother and siblings (from the east) across the plains by themselves.
- They both dealt with cholera on the plains.
- Both men were hunters for their wagon companies' providing meat and heroic stories of courage.
- Both men were young, full of physical strength.
- Both sought and discovered gospel truths on their own and were determined to dedicate their lives to its cause.
- Both served a couple of missions traveling to the east.
- During the Utah War in 1857, they were both in Echo Canyon making the road impassable for the government troops.
- Both were men of God. Enduring faithfully throughout their lives.
- They both settled in the Ogden area. In 1868, George *“took a sub-contract to make the grade for a portion of the Union Pacific Railroad which ran through his farm.”* While William in 1867 *“worked on construction for the Union Pacific Railroad which was close to his home in Ogden.”*
- George's son, Joseph John Hill and William's daughter Martha Matilda Stowell were married in 1878 by Daniel H. Wells in the Endowment House, taking a carriage from Ogden to Salt Lake City. So, at least by then the two families were well acquainted.

We imagine at family gatherings or around the dinner table they enjoyed each other's company telling of their exploits, sharing hunting stories, and recounting their blessings as they watched their in-common grandchildren play.



Joseph John Hill, son of George and Cynthia Hill married Martha Matilda Stowell, daughter of William and Sophronia Stowell June 1878. These pictures were taken about 1920 after 42 years of marriage.

Other Tidbits from William's Life:

He:

- took the hard jobs that others were reluctant to do.
- was the best marksman in killing buffalo.
- adopted 6 nieces and nephews and raised them as his own.
- brought his mother and 8 younger siblings across the plains.
- was a stalwart follower, never wavering, doing whatever he was called to do.
- participated in building 5 temples: Nauvoo, St. George, Manti, Logan and Salt Lake.
- served two missions: 1. Political to New York 2. Searching genealogical records in Indiana.
- suffered in a winter camp as a captured prisoner of the U.S. army, for 9 months.
- was poisoned 3 times and attempted escape.
- was directed by the Holy Ghost and given the gift of prophecy.
- was given divine intervention and inspiration.
- at times, lived very comfortably, having the conveniences of the day, and even prospering.
- dreamed dreams that came true.
- was blessed with protection and physical health and strength; even though he suffered, and sacrificed.
- worked to get the rock, and lumber out of the mountains and helped to build the territorial State House in Fillmore, Utah.
- lived a life of physical labor and service, caring for his large family.

- wanted to keep up family relationships and did much family history work.
- was bold in sharing the gospel message and in bearing his testimony.
- lived in plural marriage having three wives, and testified that it was a divine law.
- was married four times. His first wife divorced him.
- raised a total of 32 living children! (wives: Cynthia-9; Sophronia-7; Harriet-8; 6 -orphans; 1-step-child, perhaps others?)
- endured well; was faithful to the end; was blessed with happiness, posterity and material prosperity.

At the end of his life, James Little, wrote his biography, under William's direction. Much of the information I use is taken from this. It is most important to tell this story in William's own words.

Note: When I quote from his biography, I use this font. My commentary is in this font.

Introduction

William's own introduction to his biography:

"As I approach the age of three score and ten, the importance of leaving a record of my life for my posterity was seriously impressed upon me. As its importance was manifest, the indifference in youth and middle-age which led me to be careless about keeping a journal or preserving letters and other valuable papers has been a matter of serious regret.

When I received the gospel of the Son of God, the spirit of gathering with the Saints to the places God had appointed was upon me. Like our Father Abraham, I left my kindred and native land at the command of God. In doing this, my object was to cast my lot with the gathered Israel of the latter days and share in the blessings that were in store for them. Since doing this, the blessings of the Father have been sealed upon me by the Holy Priesthood, even the power of eternal increase. I have the fullest faith that if I keep the covenants I have made in holy places that all these blessings will be realized in the future that lies before us. If so, then will every event of my life be of deep interest to my posterity from the fact that those events will influence their destiny.

I bear my testimony to all to whom this record shall come that the gospel I have embraced is from heaven; that it has been planted in the earth for the salvation of the race; that it will never be taken from the earth, but will accomplish the object for which it was sent -- the exaltation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked and of the purification and sanctification of the earth."

—William Rufus Rogers Stowell

Birth and Conversion

William Rufus Rogers Stowell was born in Solon, Oneida County, New York, September 23, 1822. His parents were: Augustus Oliver Artimus Stowell (1783-1860) and Mary Stephens Holmes Stowell (1797-1885). Father Augustus had been married previously having four children, and Mary eventually had nine, making 12 brothers and sisters for William.

In February 1833, on William's father's (Augustus) return from taking hay to the village he saw Mrs. Brewster who was walking. It was winter, and he offered her a ride. Mrs. Brewster said, *"It is very cold, but five persons have been baptized today."* Mr. Stowell queried, *"Of what denomination?"* She replied, *"Mormons."* With some surprise Mr. Stowell remarked, *"He had never heard of such a people."* Mrs. Brewster informed him that they were a new sect of religionists. They were holding a meeting that day and that she was on her way to attend it. She extended an invitation to him to go to the meeting and he accepted, letting his son take the wagon home. The next day on arriving home, Augustus had a copy (first edition 1830) of the Book of Mormon, (which is currently still preserved by the posterity of William).

He was in a cheerful mood as he related to his family what he had seen and heard of the new sect of religionists. His sons were old enough to attend to the usual duties of the home and farm and he, at once, became absorbed in reading the new book. He made no remarks about it until he had twice carefully conned it over, when he closed the book remarking with some emphasis, *"That book is as true as the Bible."* These circumstances from the first were attended with a strong testimony of the spirit that the doctrines of the new religion were of God.

He was baptized in his own mill-pond in April. Soon after, his wife and some of the children followed him into the church. However, William was not baptized until August 1834 (at 12 years).

Other family members later joined the Church but because of persecution, only William and his mother and one sister remained in the Church.

Divided Family

When William was nearly three years old, the family moved to Westfield, Chautauqua, New York. William spent his youth assisting in the building and upkeep of his father's farm. Augustus owned 260 acres. Besides caring for orchards and farm land he bred animals and especially stallions that he sold for a good price. He was thrifty and prosperous and in just a few years' time had all the conveniences and comforts of a wealthy farmer of his time. He was also a practicing lawyer for the Supreme Court of New York.

William's Father, Augustus

At the time of his baptism, father Augustus was fully convinced that the doctrines taught by the Mormon Elders were of divine origin. However, a few months later in the winter of 1833, the Elders visited their branch in New York asking for men and means to help the Saints who were being persecuted and driven from their homes.

On hearing the rumors of calamities and persecutions following the saints he wondered if they deserved it and were doing something that brought it on. He had heard that the Mormons were

about to break out in rebellion against the government of the United States. He was a strong patriot and very loyal to the government of his country. He became bitter and refused to give aid. These views prepared him to sacrifice his religion to his patriotism, and he withdrew from the Church. He doubtless was honest in motive, but in error with regards to facts. In time, he became intolerant, and so antagonized his wife and children in the practice of their religion that he forbade them the privilege of mingling with the Saints. This condition of affairs lasted about eight years, when the wife and mother felt she could no longer endure the pressure on herself and family.

(Note: Family Search.org tells us that Augustus's father, Oliver Stowell 1744-1836, was born in Connecticut, 'British America.' He was a physician and served in the revolutionary war. 'Stowell' was also spelled, 'Stoel' and 'Stewell.' In 1843, William was 20 years old. He found employment in a city not far from his home. He attended LDS meetings and was ordained an Elder. During this time, his Mother, Mary, filed for divorce. William was able to rent a house for her and his siblings to move into. He took an active part in the court proceedings between his mother and his father. He gained half of his father's property for his mother, and the children were allowed to choose which parent to go with. They all chose to stay with their mother.

Augustus eventually went to Wisconsin to live with one of his older children and died there in 1860.

In William's declining years he says, *"It was one of the most painful experiences of my life to defend my mother as the wronged and weaker party against my father."* So impressed was he with the delicacy and importance of what he was doing that he daily sought divine guidance and daily realized the blessings he so earnestly sought."

The Spirit of Gathering

William felt the spirit of gathering and wasn't content to remain in New York. On Sept. 25, 1843 he said good bye to mother, brother and seven sisters and started alone, on foot for Nauvoo. He had only \$10 in his pocket.

At one point, he was with a companion and needed to cross the river on a ferryboat, but neither had any money to pay the fare. As the boat was about to leave, Elder Stowell asked the captain to be kind enough to let them cross free, as they were missionaries and had no money, but he was promptly refused. The boat crossed and came back. Elder Stowell told his companion that this time he was going over on the boat, and if he did not wish to be left behind, he must step onto it as he did. He again stated their case to the captain, and was refused again. Elder Stowell told him that they **MUST** get on. That they **WERE** going over on this boat. That the captain dared not put them off. They stepped on and nothing further was said to them.

On the 2nd day he met some men with a team heading west. He traveled as far as Chicago; took a steamer to Wisconsin where his sister lived and stayed with her. He found work as a carpenter and was offered 80 acres of land if he would stay permanently but he was determined to gather with the saints. He walked the rest of the way, arriving in Nauvoo, Nov. 23, 1843.

Nauvoo Temple Dream

In approaching Nauvoo, he had met with some disaffected people who belonged to the Church. They gave him some very unsatisfactory reports about the Prophet Joseph and the Saints.

Shortly after he joined the church, Bro Stowell had a dream of the unfinished temple standing on a hill. In his dream he walked inside the building and examined the workmanship. It was beautiful and expertly done. Around the hill he could see the beautiful country-side in every direction and the city with small brick houses, log houses and cabins. He was accustomed to more established cities and bigger buildings so this seemed very primitive to him. When he awakened he believed that he had seen the temple site in Nauvoo and he had a great desire to see the place.

On arriving in Nauvoo, he found the temple just as he had dreamed and was very interested in the peculiar architecture and construction. This made a very great impression upon him.

The Prophet Joseph Smith

His next objective was to visit Joseph Smith. He walked down to the Nauvoo Mansion House, which he had learned was built for the entertainment of strangers. As the weather was cool, he stood before the fire. Several men were in the room, but none of them filled his conception of the Prophet. In a short time, a man came in, and with his presence [came] the impression that he was the Prophet. As he walked up to the fire, others courteously parted to let him pass, and someone called him Brother Joseph. Then Bro. Stowell was satisfied that it was, indeed, the Prophet.

On his way to Nauvoo, he had met a man that sent a special message by Bro. Stowell to Mr. Smith about some land he wished to sell. This message included terms of sale, etc. Bro. Stowell did not wish to deliver this message in a crowd and waited for an opportunity. In a short time, the Prophet walked to the back of the room and sat down by himself on a bench. Bro. Stowell saw this as his opportunity. He sat down, introduced himself, and delivered his message. Joseph Smith listened attentively until he was through, then abruptly arose from his seat, took a long step or two and said, *"Young man, you have done well to duly deliver the message, but we do not want the land."* This first recognition and interview with the Prophet was not very flattering in the mind of Bro. Stowell.

In a day or two he was walking in one of the streets of Nauvoo when he met Joseph and passed him with the usual salutations. Joseph, then suddenly turned and said, *"Stowell! Brother Stowell, I would like to talk with you."* Words of wisdom and counsel flowed from him with the force and power of divine inspiration. The words sank deep into the heart of Bro. Stowell which helped to mold his future and make his life useful. He knew then that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of God and that the restored Church was true. Ever after, he became a dedicated church worker for there was a great deal of work to do.

Life in Nauvoo

In building up the city of Nauvoo there was a lot of work that needed to be done but little compensation. Brother Stowell was not one to remain idle so bargained to help construct a home for \$1.00 a day and his board. He says that he *"received his board through the winter and a part of his wages, the remainder of which is still due."*

Patriarchal Blessing given by Hyrum Smith, Jan. 18, 1844

Reads in Part: *"Therefore, I say unto you William, if you will continue faithful as you have begun, you shall be a bright and shining light unto this generation and unto your father's house, which light shall shine in your house, through which salvation shall be administered unto posterity and to future generations."*

Gospel Political Missionary

To aid in Joseph Smith's nomination as a candidate for the United States Presidency a core of Elders were called as Gospel Political Missionaries in the April 1844 conference. Bro. Stowell was one of these.

During the previous winter he had been a regular attendant at the meetings of the Elders quorum to which he belonged and was diligent in acquiring all the information of doctrine and the policies of the Church. He faithfully attended all the meetings where Joseph Smith, Apostle John Taylor and Elder George A. Smith informed and instructed. This attention to the duties of his office in the priesthood made him fit for the important mission before him.

He was ordained a Seventy in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, in Nauvoo, under the hands of President Joseph Smith and Elder George A. Smith.

The group of Elders left the first of May, 1844 going without purse or script, 1,000 miles on foot, back to William's family home in New York. The men were young with little experience in Church policies or general political affairs. From a human standpoint, there could have been but little hope of accomplishing the object for which these elders labored but it was all in the program of the latter-day work in which they were engaged.

Two incidences when William asked for lodging and food.

"Madam, if you feed us, we wish you to do so as servants of God, and if you turn us away, we wish you to do so as such." (In this incidence, they got fed).

On another occasion:

Elder Stowell took from his pocket the pamphlet containing General Smith's views on the "Powers and Policies of the General Government" and commenced to read it. The gentleman seemed very much interested and earnestly inquired, "Who is this Joseph Smith?" Elder Stowell explained that he was a prophet and the leader of the Mormon Church and that the doctrine he was reading contained his views of the principles of government. The gentleman stated that he had served under Washington in the Revolutionary War and that what he had heard sounded very much like his views.

In June 1844 Elder Stowell arrived at his mother's house. He had been absent eight months, during which time: he had seen the gathering place of the Saints; become acquainted with them; obtained a personal knowledge of the Prophet and leader of this dispensation; learned much of men and of the world by traveling about 2000 miles, mostly on foot; traveled at least half of this distance in filling an important mission; and had arrived at last at his old home among relatives and friends of his childhood and youth. However, *"the spirit of the gathering was upon him, and the home of his youth had lost its charm."*

On arriving at his home, he found his brother and three sisters, prepared for baptism, and he joyfully administered the ordinances. The family, now especially, looked upon him as their leader, were all prepared to migrate to Nauvoo. There were crops to gather and market, considerable property to dispose of and exchange for the means of travel, etc. Much had to be done in a short time. By the latter part of July, the family of ten and his missionary companion, with two horse teams, left New York to make their home with the Saints.

The Stowell's had been a family of thrift and influence, and many regretted their departure. Strong inducements were thrown out for Elder Stowell to remain, but he met these advancements *"with a heartfelt plea that he was a Mormon, that he could not for any worldly consideration forsake the religion that he knew to be divine, nor fail to gather with the people whose fortunes he had decided to share."*

When Joseph Smith the Prophet and his brother were assassinated, Elder Stowell was at his home. Elder Stowell says, *"While I felt to mourn deeply the loss of our noble leaders, my faith was not in the least shaken in the doctrines and principles that the Prophet had planted in the earth. The spirit of gathering with the Saints and of sharing their fortunes, whatever they might be, was still upon me, and I continued to labor diligently in preparing for the journey to Nauvoo."*

Family Travels to Nauvoo

As the Stowell family traveled they boldly advertised their destination. The words "Nauvoo" were written on both sides of the wagon cover. While encamped in Indiana one

day, a whole family came to their camp. They had seen the word "Nauvoo" and suspected that it might be Mormons. Warm greetings were exchanged. They wanted to send to Nauvoo a yoke of oxen, five two-year-old steers, and a cow to a relation of theirs, and four steers for tithing, and one to be butchered on arrival with the beef divided. For taking these, the former was paid in supplies for the road, money to pay ferrying across the rivers, and the cow furnished milk for the family, which added to their comfort.

Arriving near Carthage, Elder Stowell called at a farmer's and inquired if he would sell him some hay. Instead of answering, the farmer asked, *"You are Mormons going to Nauvoo, are you?"* There were several men standing about. These now turned their attention to the travelers. Elder Stowell replied, *"Yes, Sir, we are Mormons going to Nauvoo."* *"Don't you know that Joseph Smith has been killed?"* *"Yes, I'm aware of it."* *"Are you not afraid to travel through here?"* *"No, I'm not afraid of anything; I have as much right to travel a public road as anyone."*

There appeared to be some excitement among the bystanders and one of them remarked, *"You are darn independent."* *"Yes, I am independent, for I am an American citizen, with all the rights of one."* Turning to the farmer, he continued, *"I asked if you would sell me some hay, for which I will pay you the money. If you do not wish to, I want you to say so and I will go on."* This seemed to recall the man and he furnished the hay without further remark.

After a fairly successful journey, the family arrived in Nauvoo Sept. 9, 1844. Nauvoo did not appear to Elder Stowell as the bright, happy home of the Saints he had left a few months before. There had been no change in the general features of the country; the temple stood out in bold relief on the hill; there was the rustle and stir usual in an enterprising and growing city; but to him it seemed overshadowed with gloom, clothed in mourning. He walked the streets and conversed with friends and acquaintances, but there was a spirit of sadness over all. Perhaps this feeling was because his sensing more keenly the great loss of the Saints since his arrival in their midst, and [being] in the surroundings where he had first learned to love and revere the Prophet. Going home after one of his ramblings, he said to his mother, *"I feel so homesick, I do not know what to do. Everything looks as gloomy as death."*

Vision of The Prophet Joseph Smith

Several days past in this way, when one evening after retiring to rest he had a dream or vision which he relates as follows:

"To me it was very plain and distinct. I came up the east side of Joseph's mansion. It was not the one in which I had before seen him, but larger -- more grand and beautiful. There were broad steps in front. There were two broad folding doors, 12 or 14 ft. in height, opening to the inside. There stood a doorkeeper to inquire my business. I told him I wished to see the Prophet Joseph. He bade me follow. We passed two doors on the right of the spacious hall and came to a third which he opened and directed me to go in. The building was the most beautiful I have ever seen. Everything in the room in which I entered was of the purest white. I saw a bed where lay the Prophet on his back. As I came to the bed, he reached out his right

hand and shook hands with me. I saw the bullet hole where he was shot. From it diagonally down to his right hip was the appearance of a strip of fresh blood about the width of a man's finger. Otherwise, everything about him and his surroundings was beautiful and clean.

Joseph immediately got up, and together we walked to the front of the house. I saw there my horse and buggy by the hitching post. At the time, I had none, but it appeared that I had. I said, 'Brother Joseph, will you go home with me?' He said he would and got into the buggy while I was unhitching the horse. We conversed pleasantly as we traveled along. The streets with their ruts and undulations seemed as natural as those I traveled daily.

Arriving at my gate, we went into my house and [I] introduced him to my mother and sisters. The privilege of thus introducing the Prophet to the family afforded me great satisfaction. After a little, Joseph went to the door and looked across the city toward his residence as though he wished to go home; but I was not yet satisfied. I desired his blessing and said, 'Joseph will you bless me?' He replied, 'I will.' I sat down on the stump of a maple tree nearby, and he laid his hands upon my head and pronounced many choice blessings upon me. He also declared that the blessings of God should be upon my efforts to assist in rolling on the latter-day work. And at the close, he said with much emphasis, 'AND YOU SHALL BE BLESSED.'

When I arose in the morning, I said to my mother, "be of good cheer, Mother. Joseph is alive and all is well." The darkness and despondency that had brooded over me had passed away. My mind was at rest and with my usual courage and energy I began to labor to provide for the family and to make the home pleasant."

Marriage

Before Elder Stowell went east in the spring of 1844, he formed an acquaintance with Miss Hannah Topham. On his return, the acquaintance was renewed and they were married in Nauvoo on Christmas Day, 1844, by Elder Lorenzo Snow. Soon after marriage, he moved to a home of his own but continued to look after his mother and sisters.

Preparing for Evacuation

Elder Stowell had been raised as a farmer, and, in the season of 1845, he farmed east of Nauvoo. He was blessed with very generous crops. While much of the grain raised that season was destroyed by the mobs, he succeeded in harvesting his grain and bringing it home. In addition to farming, he shared with the people in their labors in public works and particularly in pushing the temple forward to completion. All the while, persecution was raging against the Saints, and the time was rapidly approaching when they would be compelled to leave their beautiful city in the hands of their enemies.

In the autumn of 1845, so much pressure was brought to bear that the leaders of the Saints were compelled to make a treaty with the mob to allow them to stay until spring. However, later in the season, the excitement of the mob ran so high that they were disposed to break the

treaty and the Saints were so driven that they began immediate preparation to evacuate Illinois as soon as possible.

During the latter part of January 1846, a company of pioneers of 100 picked men were organized. Elder Stowell was one of these men. The special duties of this body were to open roads, build bridges, and generally prepare the way for the oncoming traveling Saints. Also, to take jobs of work when opportunity offered and so obtain supplies for the camps. Elder Stowell did whatever was asked of him. For a time, before leaving Nauvoo, much of his labor was cutting and preparing timber for wagons and fitting up teams for the pioneers. He also did what was necessary to prepare his own outfit. From the first to the fourteenth of February 1846, he assisted [in] ferrying across the Mississippi River. On the 13th, his own team was ferried across and he encamped on the west side of the river. That night, two or 3 inches of snow fell. On Feb. 6, 1846, William was endowed in the Nauvoo Temple.

Saints on The Move

The people were encamped in a bend of Sugar Creek. Elder Stowell listened to Brigham Young, accompanied by several others of the Twelve, speak from a wagon box. Brigham began with, "*Attention, Oh Camp of Israel.*" With words of kindness dictated by a heart full of sympathy, he began to instruct them regarding their duties to themselves and each other and to the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed. He then began to organize the camp more fully for the Westward March.

There was much suffering in the camp on Sugar Creek. Violent storms, excessive cold, and fatiguing labor, made heavy drains on the strength and vitality of the people, many of whom were thinly clad and poorly fed. Fortunately, however, Elder Stowell was in full strength of vigorous young manhood and with a great capability for endurance. So, with a heart full of sympathy, he found a great daily satisfaction and pleasure in toiling for their relief and suffering. It was such men in the camps of Israel that proved saviors to the weak and feeble by sustaining them in every trying emergency.

Valiant Pioneer Women!

By the first of March 1846, the camp on Sugar Creek, comprised of nearly 400 wagons, commenced its march for the Missouri River. No mortal pen will ever truly describe the sufferings of the Saints on Sugar Creek and on their weary journey across Iowa. [Following is a quote, probably from Stowell's own writing.] "*Many of our sisters walked all day, rain or shine, and at night prepared suppers for their families with no sheltering tents and then made their beds in and under wagons which contained their earthly all. How frequently, with intense sympathy and admiration, I watched the mother, forgetful of her own fatigue and destitution, take unwearied pains to fix up in the most palatable way the food allotted to them, and as she dealt it out, cheering the hearts of her homeless children, while, as I truly believe, her own heart was lifted to God in fervent prayer that their lives might be preserved.*"

Amid these trials, there was comfort and consolation in the thought that they were leaving their enemies. All were cheerful and happy in anticipation of finding a resting place from persecution somewhere in the solitude of the Rocky Mountains. But it was not for all to realize these hopes; exposure to the elements, excessive labor, [and] want of proper food and comfortable clothing forced many to lay down their weary bodies in unknown graves.

Garden Grove, Iowa

It took until April, for William to reach Garden Grove (Iowa) where crops were planted, wells dug, houses built for those following--- a waystation. Some of the Saints, including William and Hannah, remained here to care for the crops. During this time, Elder Stowell and his company of pioneers obtained jobs of grubbing land, cutting timber and splitting rails, shucking corn etc., for which labor they received corn, bacon, provender for the animals and whatever the country could supply for the wants of the traveling camps. A cow was procured which was assigned to his tent for his use.



**William's mother, Mary
Stephens Holmes Stowell
Garner 1797-1885**

William's Mother, Mary

As one of the first hundred men chosen to be scouts, he went ahead of the main group blazing a road, cutting timber, fitting wagons for others. It was not only the fortune of Elder Stowell to be a pioneer of the first company of Saints that left the camp on Sugar Creek on the first day of spring, 1846, but as well, to assist in moving to the West, the last unfortunate remnant driven from Nauvoo. Among this group was his mother and sisters.

Elder Stowell's family were forced to remain in Nauvoo until they were driven out with others in September 1846. They were scattered into the surrounding regions.

Mother Mary reached Council Bluffs in 1848 and married William Garner. They crossed the plains and entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1852 with at least one of her daughters. After going to Provo, and Weber County she settled in Hooper. She was sealed to William Garner in 1852, along with all her children. When her husband died in 1872, she lived with her son William, until her death in 1885.

She was buried in the Ogden City Cemetery and lived a faith filled life to the end. Granddaughter, Cynthia Hill Gardner writes that even though "most of Williams's family joined the church in 1834, because of persecution, only William, his mother, and one sister remained in the church."

Missourians

A few days before the arrival of the camps at Garden Grove, Elder Stowell's company, numbering about 30 men, took a considerable job of making rails for a Missourian. On returning to their camp at the close of the day's work, they found 12 or 15 Missourians in it, well-armed. They were talking to the women and appeared quite free and sociable. It was an unusual occurrence, but the pioneers quietly awaited developments. Wrestling and other feats of strength were soon introduced among the men, in which the pioneers generally beat the Missourians, at which the latter were evidently chagrined.

They began to look a little serious and their leader stepped up to the Mormon leader and informed him that he and his company must leave the place. The leader, in a friendly, courteous manner, informed him that they had no intention of remaining, but the work they had contracted to do would be completed in a few days when they would certainly go on their way. This did not satisfy the Missourian, and he authoritatively demanded that they should leave immediately. The leader, looking him steadily in the eye, quietly remarked, *"We shall remain until our contract is filled."* Then turning to his men, he directed them to get out their guns and ammunition and see to it that they were all in good condition. The Missourians remained only long enough to see these active preparations, then abruptly retired to the Black Smith shop about one fourth of a mile distant. In the shop was a barrel of whiskey. Under the exhilarating effects of this, they hooted and howled all night and occasionally fired their guns; but they did no further damage. The work was finished, and the pioneers moved on to Garden Grove, where the leading camps had arrived on the 24th of April.

The following incident will serve to illustrate the experiences of these pioneers and the kindly spirit of some of the Missourians. The company of Elder Stowell had three large tents which sheltered the sleepers and some of their effects at night. In the night, a violent gale set in from the northwest, and two of the tents were blown down. They could not be put up again in the wind and so the men and women prepared in the middle of the night to go to the house of a Missourian not far from the camp. He welcomed the unfortunates, and he and his family vacated their beds and sat up the remainder of the night in order that the women of the company might rest. Elder Stowell is very sorry that he cannot recollect the name of this hospitable family to place it on this record.

Brother Stowell writes, *"To provide for the inhabitants of the city driven from their homes into a wilderness, exposed to the sweeping storms and bitter cold winter, with little else than the slender resources of the camp, is a task which but few men could hope to successfully accomplish. Besides the food supply of the people, it required daily large quantities of grain to sustain the animals of the camp, for these [animals] were the necessities of existence--- the peoples' means of deliverance."*

The 16th anniversary of the organization of the Church found them camped on a branch of Shoal Creek, (Missouri) where they were forced to remain for a period of two weeks because snow and mud. On the sixth of April nine or ten teams were sent to the settlement for corn. In about three days they returned, most of them empty. There was but little strength in the cold, dry grass, and the animals were poor and weak.

Sister Stowell (Hannah) accompanied her husband in all his labors with the pioneers and, with a few others of the sisters. She contributed to making the camp more cheerful and home-like. It was determined to make this a way station, a place of rest for those who preferred to stop to recruit their means of existence. It was still a seasonable time for putting in corn and other crops. The camps were organized for labor and, by the 10th of May, many houses were built, wells were dug, extensive farms fenced, and the place assumed the appearance of having been occupied for years. The 11th of May, a portion of the camps resumed their journey for the Missouri River. Elder Stowell remained at Garden Grove, cultivated a good garden and raised a fine crop of corn. The place was about 150 miles from Nauvoo.

Iowa

In March 1847, when the grass of the prairies was still brown with the frosts of winter, making it necessary to haul feed for animals, Elder Snow moved to Council Bluffs, (Iowa). He built a log house, fenced a farm and raised a crop. This was strictly in keeping with the general counsel given by the apostles -- to make improvements for themselves and for those who would follow them. Most of the Saints were preparing for their advent into the wilderness. But those expecting to remain, like Elder Stowell, were equally earnest in fencing fields, breaking up the virgin soil, and preparing to grow food for all.

On the 11th of February 1848, the first child and son was born to Elder Stowell and Haannah. His name was William John Thornton Stowell. The father had not sufficiently recovered from the sacrifices attending the Nauvoo exodus to go to the mountains this year, and so, with the idea of bettering his condition, he moved, built another house, opened another farm on which he spent the summer. Here his firstborn died, after 9 months, on November 29, 1848.

John Taylor Prophecy

Elder Stowell, in common with his people around him, was in no mood for making a permanent home. The object of his labors was to assist himself and others to reach the Saints' home in the mountains. In the winter of 1848-49, Elder Stowell found employment tending a sawmill and a gristmill under the same roof. This was his first experience in making flour.

In the winter of 1849-50, Apostle John Taylor and others arrived in the settlement on their way to Europe. Apostle Taylor had occasion to spend a night in the house of Elder Stowell. At one time during the evening, he sat with his head in his hands and appeared absorbed in meditation. Of a sudden, he turned to Elder Stowell and said, *"When are you going to the mountains?"* He replied, *"Just as soon as I can, but I do not know when."* Elder Taylor continued, *"If you will do just as I tell you, when the next emigration is ready to go, you will be on the banks of the Missouri River ready to go with them. Let all your labors, all your exchanges of property- in fact, everything you do- be with this object in view. Accept it in your faith that you are going, and in talking with others on the subject, tell them that you are going, and you will be all ready to go when the emigration starts."* Elder Stowell replied, *"I will do as you tell me, as near as I can."*

He writes, *"I accepted this prophecy in full faith that it would be fulfilled, centered all my energies in that direction. I commenced selling and exchanging property. Everything worked*

in my favor. Men would come to me wishing to buy what I had to sell, with the pay in cash or the property I wanted in exchange, often most unexpectedly. When Captain David Evans' company was ready to start about the 15th of June, I was ready to go with them with a team of four good yoke of cattle and a good outfit. Better still, I was out of debt. The prophetic promise of Elder Taylor was fulfilled in every particular."

On the Plains

There was considerable cholera among the Saints on the Platte River in 1849, and several deaths from it. It appears unfortunate that several companies of the Saints, among them that of Elder Stowell's, traveled the road on the side of the Platte River. Elder Stowell's wife and her sister both had the cholera but recovered. During this period of trial, the burden on him was excessive. He says of these times, *"There was much mud along the Platte, making the roads heavy and the labor excessive on the teams and very disagreeable on the people. Night and day, I had to wait on and care for my sick, prepare and cook food, drive my team, and stand my turn on guard at night. Under these conditions, there seemed no end to toil, and I could get but little sleep. I was sometimes asked why it was that I was never sick, and I usually replied that I had no time to be sick. The sick often died in the wagons and were hurriedly buried by the roadside. It was a time when it required all the faith in God that could be exercised and all the bodily endurance we were capable of to combat the evil that had us in its coils."*

Hunting Buffalo

On this journey, Elder Stowell had a successful experience shooting buffalo. His principal incentive was not to enjoy the excitement of hunting the noble game, but to supply the company with meat--- an article of food which the excessive labor they performed and living in the open air, caused them to crave---for which they often did without [for] many days at a time. On approaching the buffalo range, there appeared at first two buffalo near camp in the morning. The sight was new to many and created considerable excitement. Of this scene he says, *"Several men started directly after them. I settled my horse, took a rifle, pistol and knife and followed up a ravine to head them on their course. After the other pursuers had given up the chase, I shot the leader and returned to camp for assistance to dress it and get it to the wagon. It was very fat. "Another morning after traveling a few miles, three buffalo passed near the camp. The captain had a bulldog who soon waked them up to their highest speed. They were fast going to the mountains. I quickly settled my horse and took over the hills across their course and soon came up with them. They were running single file, a fact that made it difficult to get an effective shot. I determined to take the chance of breaking the file, so made a dash at the center one. As he turned, I shot him fatally."*

We had traveled some time without seeing a buffalo and the people were getting very hungry for meat.

"One day, the captain discovered a lone buffalo a long way off. He asked me if I thought I could get him. I told him I would try but would like to have someone go with me as it was too far away from camp to be prudent to go alone. The captain told me to pick my man, and I asked for Abraham Hatch. We saddled our horses and started out. We kept the hills between us and the buffalo, hoping to get near enough to shoot without scaring him. In this we were disappointed, for before we were in range, he started off full speed. I told Hatch we would

have to find him in the open now. We dashed after him, but young Hatch's horse shied and I had to try it alone. To make a reasonably sure shot, it was necessary some way to check the speed. For this purpose, I crowded the buffalo out on a ledge of rock, when suddenly, he turned and dashed at me. A touch of the spur and the horse sprang by him, but barely in time to be missed by the animal. As we passed, I shot him in the side. He was soon being dragged to camp by six yokes of oxen. After the buffalo was dressed, the captain told me to take what I wanted for my family and the balance would be distributed to the company. I told him I was not the man who wished to fare better than the rest, but that I wished to share alike with them.

It was a large fine buffalo and supplied the camp with meat for some time. Buffalo were scarce on the route, and I think I killed all that were used by the company; but the other men killed deer, antelope, etc."

Entering the Great Salt Lake Valley 1850

At Pacific Springs on the west side of South Pass, Elder Stowell waded in the cold water of the marshy ground around the springs to get the cattle out---a job which many were reluctant to do--- and was soon afterward taken with the mountain fever, but he soon recovered. Nothing further of unusual importance occurred to him on the journey to Great Salt Lake Valley, where he arrived about the middle of September [1850].

On his arrival in Great Salt Lake, Elder Stowell sensed the kindly providences of God that had been over him through the fiery furnace of affliction and the magnitude of the blessings in store for him in the midst of his people. He moved to Salt Lake and then settled in Provo, building a house and obtaining 25 acres of land north of the town on which he grew a fair crop the ensuing season. He also was involved in settling Indian difficulties and doing military duty.



William R. R. Stowell

Family Life

When William's sister, Matilda, died in childbirth (1851) he and Hannah were asked to care for the 10-day old infant. Six

months later the father remarried and took the child back home but when he was 15 months old, the father, was killed in a wagon accident. So, William took the child back and raised him as his own.

In 1852, Mrs. Stowell (Hannah) became dissatisfied and obtained a divorce. Brother Stowell and Cynthia Jane Park were married in Provo by Apostle John Taylor on the 19th of October 1852.

(It is interesting to note that although Hannah was later married and sealed to another man, William had their child, William John Thornton Stowell (who had died in infancy) sealed to himself and his second wife, Cynthia Jane, in the Logan Temple. This sealing was upheld by Church authorities, although it is unusual for a child not to be sealed to its mother. (Source: Edith Baker, Familysearch.com)

The following year in Oct., Elder Stowell's half-brother, Dan arrived with his wife and 5 children on the way to California. As Dan's health was quite poor from the fatiguing journey across the plains they decided to remain over the winter. Dan had belonged to the Church when a boy, but when he grew up he lost all interest in religion. Brother Stowell, having been much in the public service without remuneration, was in poor circumstances; but notwithstanding these difficulties, he obtained a house for his brother and assisted him to the comforts during the winter.

The following January 1854, his brother's wife died, and in March his brother's health was so far recovered that he thought of going on his way to California with his children. Just before starting, he took a severe cold and dropped off, leaving the care of his little ones to his brother (William).

Military Service

It was the fortune of Elder Stowell to be called upon to do considerable military service in defense of his people. Whenever responsibility was placed upon him, he evidently acted with efficiency and good judgment. The Provo militia was organized out of the old Nauvoo Legion, and he was mustered into an artillery company.

Captain Stowell

William became a captain in the militia. In May 1853, a company of emigrants on their way to California camped near Fillmore. As usual, with the Indians, they came around the camp to gratify their curiosity or perhaps to trade, when an emigrant drew a gun and deliberately shot one down. This was a cowardly act and naturally aroused the spirit of revenge in the Indians, who from then on, continually harassed the freighters coming over the South Route. Captain Stowell, with ten good men, was appointed to take these freighters over the mountains to Nephi, about 65 miles toward Salt Lake City. This was a very delicate task, the rivers being high and having to be forded. This took a great deal of time, and Captain Stowell did not feel at liberty to take any charge for his services. Gratitude appeared to be [a] minus quantity in the

hearts of the freighters, and they [Stowell and company] were allowed to return home empty-handed.

In the spring of 1854, the Indians engaged in the massacre of Gunnison, (Utah). Two of them were young Ute chiefs from Kanosh near Fillmore. Someone was to convey them to Salt Lake, but for some time no one could be found for the job. As a last resort, President John A. Ray came to Captain Stowell, who consented to undertake the journey. He made a long trip without fear, and the Indians seemed to respect him and they gave no trouble whatever. From Provo, he was accompanied by Deputy U.S. Marshall George Bean, who assisted him in delivering the prisoners over to the proper authorities. He was given \$97.50 for his pay, which was greatly appreciated.

In the spring of 1855, news arrived from Iron County that considerable excitement had been raised among the Ute Indians. Men, on arrival at Brother Stowell's in Provo, nearly exhausted for want of sleep and with their animals badly worn. Captain Stowell, as was characteristic of him, took them rapidly to Salt Lake in a carriage in which the men could get some sleep. They changed teams twice on the way. The governor, Brigham Young, at once ordered 800 men, among whom was Captain Stowell, under Captain William Wall of Provo, to proceed to Iron County by forced march. Without baggage wagons and with only what they could carry on their horses, the march was rapidly accomplished. On arriving at Parowan, the difficulty was amicably settled and the expedition returned to Provo.

The Indian War

There had been considerable uneasiness manifest among the Ute Indians during the spring and early summer. A settler was shot by Indians when going after water at a spring behind his house. This fairly inaugurated an Indian war. 150 cavalry of Col. Peter Conover marched south to assist the weak settlements. Captain Stowell was one of this expedition. In Manti and Sanpete Valley, the Indians were quite active and hostile, making several attacks on settlements and individuals. For a season, Captain Stowell was on hand for military duty. He kept a hired man who worked for him when at home and for whom an outfit was furnished when in the public service. During this time, Captain Stowell was also commissary for Col. Conover.

Building Utah State Territory House in Fillmore

Elder Stowell, was called among others to go south with one hundred other men and their families to strengthen the place because the Indians, sold his property in Provo and moved to Fillmore with his family.

Fillmore, being in the center of the state, was the site first selected as the Utah State Territory capital. An appropriation had been made by the Congress of the United States to build a State House in Fillmore. The first work Elder Stowell engaged in on his arrival in Fillmore was hauling rock for this building. In the winter of 1854-5 Stowell labored in the canyon, getting out lumber and sawing it while often working on the building itself. He worked two yokes of steers with several [other] animals and managed to winter on the range grass around him. In the spring, he went to farming and

succeeded in getting food for his family. Then at times he worked at his former business of butchering, which greatly assisted him to live.

Sacrifice and Love

Elder Stowell took his brother's five children to his home in Fillmore to raise them as his own. This shows the nobility and greatness of heart of his wife Cynthia who was about to give birth to her first child. On Saturday, April 22nd, 1854, Elder Stowell arrived home with the orphaned children. On Monday the 24th, his son Brigham was born. Thus, the wife, could extend a mother's care and sympathy to the orphans who had been brought to her hearthstone in very destitute circumstances. Elder Stowell says, *"We found ourselves in a new country, much reduced in circumstances, with a family of seven children, six of whom were orphans."*

Miraculous Healing

"One day, accompanied by two of my brother's little boys, I was at work in the field. On returning home, I took the youngest on the horse behind me. I told the other one to mount the other horse. He attempted to do so from the wrong side of the animal and carelessly put his foot in the stirrup without grasping the bridle rein. The unusual circumstance frightened the animal and it ran about fifty yards with the foot in the stirrup. With every jump of the horse, he was jerked up and his head bumped on the ground. With great presence of mind, the lad worked the foot out of his boot, which released him just before reaching a rocky piece of ground where doubtless he would have been killed."

The horse I rode became so excited that I was obliged to hold her and could not let go to stop the other horse. When the boy released himself from the stirrup, he rose, brushed the sand from his face and said he wasn't hurt but immediately wilted down senseless. I worked with him for some time before signs of life began to appear. I got him onto the horse and took him home. He was so dazed that he paid little attention, but he roused up a little and said, "Uncle, I would like to be administered to." I asked in a nearby neighbor and we administered to him. He immediately began to look around, then he arose to his feet, first trying one foot, then the other, to see if he could stand. He walked across the floor and said, "I am well and feel well." The following day he requested me to baptize him. He was about twelve years old at this time; had learned some of the principles of the gospel, and I gladly initiated him into the Church."

Moving to Ogden

In the fall of 1854, Elder Stowell inquired of Brigham Young if he was at liberty to move from Fillmore and was given permission to do so. In the spring of this year, Apostle George A. Smith had advised him to move to Ogden, saying that it would be the chief city in all that region and be the center of population and commerce. This was 15 years before the junction of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific at Ogden. Time has verified the truth of this prophetic statement.

In June 1855, Elder Stowell moved to Bingham's Fort in Weber County where he had many friends and relatives. He considered his residence there as temporary and took a town lot in Ogden to improve as he had opportunity. (Great-grandson, Eldon Gardner, said that he owned

the east bench of Ogden, where Ogden High is located.) This was the memorable year in which the grasshoppers destroyed most of the grain crop of the country. The loss and suffering was aggravated by drought. The combined evils causing a great failure in crops. Elder Stowell, because the lateness of the season did not attempt to farm, but did very well in gathering bread for his family by assisting to harvest the short crops of grain. He also cut considerable wild hay to feed his animals the coming winter. Now, the old adage that "calamities never come single" was verified. The light crops were followed by an unusually severe winter. Snow fell early from one to two feet deep. The winter continued severely cold until the 21st of March, when the weather moderated as to bring on a rapid thaw. This produced so much water that the country might be said to "be afloat."

The snow was too deep for the cattle to find grass on the range. The limited amount of hay on hand was soon exhausted, and in the latter part of winter and in early spring, the cattle died by the hundreds. Some of the cattle owners foreseeing the evil, in January slaughtered their cattle that were not too poor, for food, and distributed the beef among the people, gratis.

In the autumn of 1855, William Rufus Rogers Stowell had 19 head of animals---and with close care---he had only 6 in the spring of 1856. With these calamities, the people were much reduced in circumstances.

Testimony of Tithing

Elder Stowell says, *"In the autumn of 1855, I did not pay my stock (animal) tithing because I thought the Bishop offered too low a price on them. Then I lost my cattle anyway., The circumstances caused me serious reflection and I determined to not commit any more errors of that kind. The next autumn I took a fine horse, a harness and saddle to the Bishop, paid my tithing and have paid it up or ahead ever since."*

Plural Marriage

On the 9th of October 1855, Sophronia Kelley of Bingham's Fort was married to Elder Stowell in Salt Lake City by Brigham Young. This was in accordance with the revelation on the eternity of the marriage covenant including plurality of wives given through Joseph the Seer in Nauvoo, July 12, 1843.



Sophronia Kelley, William Stowell's third wife.

Sophronia was William's third wife, and he was her third husband (see Sophronia's history for details on her other marriages).

Five years later, in 1860, he married his fourth wife, Harriet Eliza Stowell who was one of his half-brother Dan's children, whom he had raised as his own. She was 17 years old. William was 38. Harriet had eight children, bringing William's children to a total of 25, plus the six orphans he had taken in, plus Sophronia's oldest son--a total

of 32 in all! William was 62 years old when his last child was born.
(Source: Edith Baker, Familysearch.org)

William comments on plural marriage, *"It is 37 years since I assumed the relation of plural marriage. I have been successful in raising a large family who have faith in the Gospel. I entered this principle for its purity, believing it to be the way of exaltation and eternal life. I have worked by faith to secure the glorious results promised to those that are faithful."*

A granddaughter says, "He built a long rock house. Each family had their own part of the house, but they all met together in one large dining room for their meals. I remember my mother saying that there were twenty-one places at the table."

Utah War

There were rumors of growing excitement in the east against the Mormons. These proved to be preludes of the coming storm. The deep snows of the winter had practically cut off communication between the Eastern States and Utah.

A threatened war between the Mormon Saints and the United States government began with Associate Justice of Utah, W.W. Drummond who hated the Mormons. He spread falsehoods back east that the *"rebellious Mormons wanted to take over the country and were going to overthrow the U.S. government."* Without substantiating the rumors and acquiring the facts, 2500 soldiers were sent to Utah to "take care" of the Mormons.

Word of this action did not reach Salt Lake City until July 24. By this time troops were on the borders of Utah (around Evanston, Wyoming). The Mormon saints resolved to fight for their homes rather than be driven out. The Saints began preparing for war.

Stowell was appointed Adjutant to Mormon Major Joseph Taylor's regiment. The fastest way from Evanston, Wyoming to Salt Lake was down Echo and Weber Canyons. Brigham Young ordered them to go to the canyon and make the road as impassable as possible. They rolled down big boulders and chopped down large trees as deterrents. (It worked! It did slow down the oncoming soldiers traveling with heavy artillery and wagons.)

Captain Stowell's Dream of Survival

Captain Stowell says in his journal, *"In the night I dreamed that I had been a prisoner in the United States troops and had escaped without any material injury; then in my dream, I was returning home and was traveling on horseback down Echo Canyon accompanied by a companion."*

Journal entry: *"I marched the battalion towards Fort Bridger. After about two miles, we fell in with Colonel Porter Rockwell, also on his way to Fort Bridger with a herd of seven United*

States oxen. He requested help to drive them. This assistance was furnished.” (What a paradox! That the Mormon soldiers were taking oxen to the enemy!)

Captured and Taken Prisoner of the United States

Stowell and Taylor were also asked to spy on the enemy troops to know their whereabouts. At the same time, the enemy was aware of the two and were always trying to capture them.

“We were ordered to follow the troops and watch their movements. We did so closely, when three horsemen appeared one coming on each side of me and one directly in front. The latter called me to surrender. As we were ordered not to shed blood unless necessary and to save our lives. I surrendered my rifle and revolver. I was escorted down the hill to the command which consisted of ninety in the cavalry and was placed in the front file of the main body.”

Important Papers and Divine intervention

Riding on horseback in the front of the cavalry Stowell comments,

“The most important papers in my possession were the orders from General Wells. They, with others, were in a small black book used for a journal and carried in my shirt bosom. I could see no better plan than to get rid of them, if possible, to prevent their falling into the hands of my captors.

After dark, I took the book containing the papers from my bosom with the intention of dropping it by the side of the horse. When about to do so, a quiet, distinct voice said, ‘Keep them, for they will do you more good than harm.’ This restrained and surprised me. It was difficult to drop the idea that the papers should be destroyed. I was again about to drop the papers when the voice came again with more force and power, repeating the assertion that the papers would do more good than harm. I was again restrained and rode along, pondering in my mind what the manifestation should mean. Again, I decided that it was all nonsense. I determined to succeed the third time by dropping the papers suddenly; but the voice was too quick for me and with still greater force than before repeated: ‘Keep them, for they will do more good than harm.’ Being convinced by this time that the voice was no delusion, I decided to keep the papers, and put them away in my bosom.”

Stowell was questioned and searched. The little book was found. *“I felt very down-spirited, realizing that our enemies had got possession of the orders that I so much dreaded should fall into their hands and the result was very uncertain in my mind. I knew not what to do. In this emergency, the precious advice given by the Savior to his disciples came to my mind.*

‘When ye are brought before rulers and judges, take no thought what ye shall say, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.’

This brought with it peace and assurance and produced a calm, pleasant state of mind.”

“When brought into the colonel's presence he questioned me closely about the Mormon resistance. I told him it would be impossible for him to get through the mountains at any locality because a strong force awaited his arrival. He then inquired very particularly about

Echo Canyon and that vicinity. I answered that it would be impossible for them to get through in any direction, as I was well acquainted in Echo and knew that my people were building strong fortifications as I had assisted in the labor. That they had prepared great quantities of rocks on top of mountains to be ready to roll them off at the opportune time and smash an enemy to pieces. He seemed too indignant as to manifest a spirit of revenge and was much astonished at my boldness. I told him that, "I realized that they had the Major and myself in their power and perhaps might kill us, but we were only two and there would be plenty (Mormon soldiers) left. This interesting interview closed and the sergeant marched me back to the guard house."

In Stowell's journal currently posted at Fort Bridger it reads: "The Mormons had some 3,000 men well-armed and equipped in Echo and if they (the army) should make the attempt they would be cut to pieces. This conversation caused the Colonel. to abandon the idea of going in that winter." (Source: Familysearch.org)

Captain Donovan came into the guard tent "and asked me what I thought of Mormonism? I answered that I would rather die than deny my religion. He said, "We do not care about your religion if you will not fight the government." (demonstrating that he was sufficiently worried).

Questions: "Are there many Mormons in the mountains? Are you acquainted with Echo? Are there many encamping in Echo? What is the strength of the Mormon forces? Have you much artillery?"

Answers: "Yes, the mountains are full of them. Yes, Sir. Yes Sir, a great many and more coming every day. Probably from twenty-five to thirty thousand. Quite an amount, Sir, as I have seen pieces in the different settlements."

Clearly his answers served to intimidate the enemy, making them frightened of the resistance and unsure as to what to do. The decision was to wait until spring and the arrival of General Johnston. This meant that they had to wait out the long, cold winter.

He writes in his journal: "*The snow was deep and the weather bitter cold. Many of the men were frost bitten and cattle and mules perished by the score*". The camp, thirty miles from Fort Bridger was named 'the camp of death.' Five hundred animals perished around the camp on the night of the 6th of November. With supply wagons not able to get through the snow, even the U.S. army suffered, being reduced to half-rations which meant that the prisoners suffered even more.

Charged with Treason Against the U.S. Government

The United States Judges residing in the military camp organized a United States District Court. "*The clerk read an indictment in which myself and seventy others were named and charged with treason against the government of the United States.*"

Many of the other men were either released, got away or later escaped, but Captain Stowell and Major Taylor stayed together. The two men were taken to the main army camp stationed

above Evanston. The soldiers took away the prisoners' coats and shoes to keep them from escaping. Their legs were shackled with a ball weighing about 25 pounds attached to a chain. At times, they were handcuffed together *"by our left arms making it difficult to walk or lie down"* and other times the two men's *"left legs were shackled together. When on our feet, this compelled one to stand behind the other and when laying down side by side, the arm of one was stretched across his body. This was extremely uncomfortable."* Being winter in Wyoming, without proper clothing and enough food, they were always cold.

"The 26th of November 1857, Governor Brigham Young wrote to the commander of the United States forces at Fort Bridger concerning certain prisoners in his camp as follows: '... And if you imagine that keeping, mistreating or killing Mr. Stowell will resound to your advantage, future experience may add to the stock of your better judgment.' and that 'any abuse of him would be justly resented.'"

Escape

Every evening, a herd of cattle were driven past, going from a day corral to a night corral, while the soldiers crowded around a large fire for warmth. Taylor told Stowell that *"he was going to step into that herd of cattle and escape."* Stowell told him not to try it because he would surely die. Taylor said, *"Well, we will die here, anyway, so I am going to try it."* He watched his chance and stepped into the moving herd of cattle, and escaped into the darkness, leaving Stowell by the fire.

Later, Stowell learned that Brother Taylor had not gone far before he found a pair of shoes in the road. A little farther on he found a coat hanging on a bush. About daybreak he met a man on a horse who gave him a ride into Ogden.

This last paragraph makes for a good ending but "sounds too good to be true" ---which really might be the case! My guess is that more recent story tellers added this ending. This ending has been widely copied and published but William does not say this in his journal.

From Williams journal on display at Fort Bridger, Wyoming: *"When Major Taylor was found missing, a force was immediately rallied and sent in pursuit which afterwards returned and reported that they found him and killed him. I (William) told them it was a falsehood and that they had not found him."*

Nothing more is said of Major Taylor and we don't know what happened to him.

After Taylor left, the shackles were put on both of my legs.

Attempted Escape

Captain Stowell joined Corporal Nichalson, a military prisoner, in a plan for making their escape. Their preparations included: bribing a guard to keep them in the rear and letting them go; making a wooden key to unlock the shackles; filling a guard's half-cocked gun barrel with

hard soap; making pockets inside of Stowell's coat; filling coat pockets with food; gathering other supplies such as: a pair of socks, a pair of gloves, a butcher knife and a sling shot; and Nichalson carried \$850.00 in gold on his person. *"So, in different ways, both were too well loaded for much of a race."*

The plan commenced. Captain Stowell unlocked his shackles and threw them out into the snow. The guard refused to let them go, telling them he was afraid to do so. He wanted more money. Twenty dollars more was paid him, and he told them to go. With some delay, he got his gun off as the escaped prisoners emerged from the willows that surrounded the guard camp. (He was afterwards tried by court-martial and the firing of his gun saved him from punishment.) At the discharge of the gun, the dogs barked, the trumpets sounded, and there was general excitement in the camp.

The escaped prisoners passed two sentinels with guns, who rushed after Captain Stowell and his companion. The former had been so long in confinement and irons that he could not handle himself to his advantage. He jerked off his coat loaded with provisions, threw it and the sling shot away. (Gone was) the food that was to sustain him in making this desperate effort. It was a run for life, but they succeeded in getting away from their pursuers. The weather was clear and cold. The snow was very deep in the mountains.

They passed the tent of the picket guard so near that they heard the men playing cards inside. They also passed the patrol without attracting their attention. After clearing the patrol, they passed between the camps of the dragoons and volunteers; the latter being teamsters who were compelled to accept military duty in order to obtain rations for their subsistence through the winter.

About twelve miles south of Fort Bridger, (Wyoming) the Mormons had made a settlement called Fort Supply and evacuated it before the arrival of the United States troops. Captain Stowell and companion first recognized their whereabouts when they were near the deserted settlement. From there they took into the mountains aiming to go over into Provo Valley; but the deep snow and lack of food made it impractical to reach there.

They halted about midnight and made a fire in a grove of timber. Captain Stowell pulled off his boots and socks, and waded in the snow to take the frost out of his feet while his companion was starting a fire. After warming, they traveled on until daylight when they encamped in a thick grove for the day. There they made basket snowshoes out of brush, but found they could not use them, the snow being so light they would sink in and load up. Becoming discouraged about reaching Provo Valley, they turned more to the right with the hope of striking the emigration road towards Bear River.

Finding their strength failing through the severity of the weather and their excessive labor, with no means of obtaining food, they decided they must get back to [the army] camp. With great exertion and suffering, they reached camp with their feet, hands, and faces frozen and their strength quite exhausted.

At first, Corporal Nichalson was imprisoned for some light offence. After the effort to escape, he was tried by court-martial and sentenced to receive fifty lashes, be imprisoned for

six months in a military prison and at the end of that term to be dishonorably discharged from the service. Elder Stowell says, *"I was compelled to see the fifty lashes severely administered. When I was released, he was still a prisoner with ball and chain. The punishment seemed to me barbarous in the extreme."*

Captain Stowell was again examined by Colonel Alexander and placed (in solitary confinement) under the watch of a guard, with both legs shackled. He says, *"I was visited by Judge Eckles who said he would prefer to have perished on the mountains than to have to come back. I replied that I was not yet ready to die and of the two evils I preferred the least."*

Captain Stowell was taken to the camp blacksmith shop to be fitted for another ball and chain. The blacksmith purposefully struck the hinge of the ankle shackle and said, "It is cracked, but still I think it will do."

After being thus heavily ironed (however, the sympathetic blacksmith purposely cracked the latch so that William could have undone it, but he never did) and his rations very much shortened, that he might not be able to accumulate food for another attempt to escape.

There was also an attempt to destroy him by poison.

Poisoning Thwarted by Divine Intervention

Stowell remained a prisoner in the army camp all winter. *"To the soldiers, I was a nuisance, but they dared not shoot me."*

Three times the soldiers tried to poison him.

Once, when Stowell was very hungry; *they brought him a large bowl of hot stew-filled with vegetables and meat. "As it was brought into the tent, I felt that something was wrong, and I told Major Taylor, that soup is poisoned." Major Taylor tasted it remarking, 'I am awful hungry.' I ate a little of mine, but the Major considerable more of his. He was taken very sick. I administered to him and he was relieved by vomiting. I dug a hole in the ashes and turned the soup into it and covered it up. Then I was taken sick. With the blessing of God, we both recovered.*

And: *"An attempt was again made to destroy me by poison." I received a present from a Mrs. Wordsworth who I knew in Payson, Utah. She had apostatized and sought the protection of the U.S. Military. The present was a very nice-looking pie. I at once suspicioned that some evil game was about to be played on me. I tasted of the pie and it turned me sick. I threw the rest out.*

(In several of my sources, the pie incident isn't even mentioned. And other accounts have changed it. The most common is---that he attempts three times to eat the pie but every time his arm freezes up and he can't get it to his mouth. He finally throws it out of the back of the tent and a large dog trotting by takes the pie in one bite, takes a few steps and with a howl drops over dead.)

The third time, *"The judge sent a present to me of a bottle of liquor. The man who delivered it to me said, "Mr. Stowell, there is some chloroform in it. Judge especially charged me not to let the other prisoners taste of it nor to drink it myself."* Stowell didn't drink. Stowell poured out most of the bottle leaving a little bit in it. Another prisoner came in, drank the rest of the bottle and was immediately taken sick and conveyed to the hospital.

(Other accounts give this ending: "Stowell heard a disturbance outside of his tent. The soldier lay on the ground --- dead. Stowell over heard a soldier say, 'I guess he got the dose we fixed up for Stowell.'")

Perhaps these stories were told by word of mouth and embellished with each telling but I suspect that there was no truth in these endings.)

End of War---Release

By June of 1858, the problems were solved, thanks to the intervention of Colonel Thomas Kane, ambassador of peace between the Mormons and a newly appointed Governor. Cummings was ushered into Salt Lake City and accepted as Governor of the territory of Utah, upon which he instructed General Johnston that the services of the military were no longer required. A proclamation was issued pardoning the Mormons for all they had done.

Captain Stowell was released from confinement. He says of the event, *"Before releasing me, I was sworn to be true in my allegiance to the government of the United States. I was then escorted to the blacksmith shop to be relieved of my irons."*

When the smith came to take off the shackles, I turned the end to him that was sound and cautioned him not to injure my leg. I stood in an awkward position, purposely making it rather difficult to loosen the iron. After a little bit, I said, *'Let me take the tools, I can take it off sooner than you can.'* I sat down, applied the chisel to the weak joint and with a slight tap of the hammer, parted the iron, remarking that I could have taken that off any time since it was put on, in five minutes. The watching officers turned away, laughing, I presume, at the uselessness of ironing prisoners for safe keeping.

The judge who had tried to poison me, had become friendly to me and sympathetic to my situation. He sent out notice that Stowell had been prisoner for a good while and his family probably needed assistance since they had suffered in his absence. "He donated \$3.00. Soon a lieutenant gave me \$15.00. I gathered a total of \$47. 50 and a white shirt and handkerchief, to which I was thankful."

The army soldiers were ordered to break camp and march through Salt Lake City without breaking rank. Stowell was to travel with Governor Cummings, both on horseback. *"We traveled together down the identical piece of road that I had seen in my dream. Riding on a horse, with a companion. I was afterwards told by my friends that there was a mob that was waiting to kill me, but my being so close to the Governor prevented them."*

The city was deserted, and the people all gone. A pile of straw was in front of every house. The governor asked what all this meant. I replied, *"The people are gone and the straw put there so that in case the soldiers took the city, it could be thrown into the houses and set on fire and the soldiers would find it in the same condition as the Mormons found it when they came in."* The governor, with tears in his eyes, said he would do all in his power to have the people come back to their homes and enjoy them.

We went about eight miles and crossed Bear River and found the Camp of the Peace Commissioners. I was introduced as *"Mr. Stowell, a released Mormon prisoner."* Major Powell said, *'Glad to meet with you, Mr. Stowell. I brought the order for your release from President Buchanan in my vest pocket.'* I replied, *'Major, when you return to Washington, please convey to President Buchanan my kind regards and sincere thanks.'* We had a pleasant interview.

Even though emaciated and half-crippled after carrying irons, he felt that he was an instrument in preserving the saints.

Recovery and Prosperity

After, being imprisoned, near starvation, and mistreated (for nine or ten grueling months) his granddaughter Almeda Hill Gardner writes, "he never fully recovered from this experience and his health was never the same." However, she adds, *"He was a sick man, but a happy one, to be released as a prisoner."*

He found his wives in Piontown (Salem) and Payson (Utah) where they moved when Johnston's Army was imminent. Cynthia Jane had given birth to a baby boy in Ogden one week before she was compelled to move south. Sophronia had a baby girl, born in Salt Lake while she was enroute south. He was able to resettle his families back home on his farm in Ogden and stay home and improve his family situation which was in a destitute situation.

He found that even though they had substantial food, they were very destitute of clothing, for there was no market in which to purchase it and material for its manufacture was very scarce and expensive, when they could get it. In 1861 the Bishop of Ogden and Stake President of Weber Stake asked him to care for the sheep, horses, and cattle of the people of Weber County. *"I cheerfully responded to their wishes."*

He joined the "Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society." He was successful in raising sheep which alleviated the clothing need. He also created a business producing large amounts of cheese and butter *"for which we found a ready market."* He planted crops, bred horses, built a sawmill and *"did well financially."*

August 1860, he married Harriet Eliza Stowell, which gave him three wives.

In the spring of 1867 he worked on construction for the Union Pacific Railroad which was close to his home in Ogden. The railroad brought new work opportunities which were an asset to Stowell.

He did well at selling his produce and products. He built a two-story rock house, barn, outbuildings, and irrigation system with reservoir.

Church Work Summary

- He was *“asked by a church bishop to start a business manufacturing cheese and butter in the Ogden Valley. He did this in 1862 with his wife Cynthia.”*
- 1865, he was called as *“Superintendent of the Sunday School of the First Ward District of Ogden”* and served in that position for years.
- In 1884, he served a mission to gather genealogy records and information in Indiana. However, he traveled a greater distance --- to states in the mid-west, the east and Canada, seeking records. This time he traveled by train.

He preached and spread the Gospel as much as he could while he also visited with many of his family and other relatives. He found them mostly very receptive.

- Beginning with the Nauvoo Temple he helped build the: Salt Lake, St. George, Manti, and Logan Temples.
- In 1885, he was also called on a 4-month mission to California to gather more genealogy records.
- He *“did much temple work for his dead relatives.”*
- In 1895, in Mexico, he was made a Patriarch.

A Pluralist

In July 1862, Congress passed a bill "to punish and prevent the practice of polygamy in the Territories of the United States and other places." It became law by the approval of President Lincoln, but was not enforced for 20 years. In 1882, Congress passed the "Edmunds Bill." It was designed for the suppression of polygamy in the territories, an act against the Latter-Day Saints.

While on his mission in 1884 a newspaper reporter interviewed him in an article entitled ‘A Genuine “Mormon”’ In the Moline, Illinois *Daily Republican*.

The article summarizes William’s life, and calls him a *“full-fledged “Saint”, pleasant appearing, who looks like a well-to-do farmer, who does not in the least appear the amorous man we are accustomed to picture as a polygamist.”*

(On the side: When meeting a cousin that he hadn’t seen in 36 years---The cousin, turned to his wife and said, 'This is my cousin. He is a Mormon from Utah. He has three wives and is the father of twenty-five children.' At this announcement, she threw up her hands in surprise and earnestly looked at me as if expecting something strange and unusual in my appearance. But discovering nothing peculiar, she soon became reconciled to my presence and interested in conversation.)

Reporter: What is the feeling among your people regarding the recent legislation of Congress concerning polygamy?"

William: "Well, we feel that it is unconstitutional. The Constitution of the United States provides that there shall be no interference with the religious beliefs of any of the people of the country. This law prohibiting polygamy is certainly such an interference, as we think it is a command of God that we should practice it. The belief in polygamy is founded on a revelation to Joseph Smith and the Old Testament which commands man to increase and multiply."

Reporter: "What will the Mormons do in case the Government persists in its efforts to wipe out polygamy?"

William: "They will die for their faith. I don't mean that they will rebel against the Government, but they will die rather than give up what they think is right. We think the Supreme Court will decide that the war on Polygamy is a religious persecution."

William goes on to explain about the church and give more details of polygamy which is printed accurately. "Stowell has lived for 34 years in the Utah territory and has endured great hardships in common with all the Mormons. . . but now, thanks to irrigation and cultivation, they have a land of plenty. He thinks the climate has become less rigorous than it was at first and that the soil is improving."

In 1882 the polygamy raids began. Federal law enforcement went after the pluralist's rounding them up to pay fines and serve jail time. For 6 years, William spent a lot of time "on the run" and "in hiding" from law enforcement. He finally got tired of it and in 1888 he turned himself in, paid the fine, of \$233.00 and was finally free.

Colonia Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico

In 1889, Stowell after selling his property and settling his affairs, moved with several of his children and wife Cynthia, to Colonia Juarez, Mexico. (His wife Sophronia went to Franklin, Idaho and lived close to her daughter, Martha Matilda Stowell Hill and died there. His wife, Harriet went to Nevada to live with her children and died there.



The Stowell home in Colonia Juarez, Mexico

Flour Mill

"I had not been in Juarez over one hour when my wife's cousin, Wm. McLelland, prevailed on me to go with him to look at a mill site. It looked so practicable and so much needed by our people in Juarez and other settlements that I took considerable interest in the matter."

He did build the mill. It was the only flour mill of its kind in that area. People came from all around to have their grain ground, even a distance of 60 miles. It was common, to have 10 – 12 wagons waiting, each man taking his turn. Sometimes groups

camped on his property staying up to two weeks. Each driver prepared to care for his own needs around a big campfire. The mill was a popular place to meet old friends and enjoy their own entertainment.

It was a thriving business and he prospered but more importantly to him was now the people could get their grain ground into flour locally. He was happy and pleased.

The Abundant Life

His apple orchard was a favorite of the school children who he often shared apples with. A granddaughter writes of seeing the bins holding different kinds and colors of apples and *“we could eat all we wanted.”* She thought that her grandparents *“were the wealthiest people in the world to have so many good things to eat and be fixed so comfortable in their home.”*

Besides food, another grandchild writes about *“his fine horses, jersey cows and the surrey that he used for transportation. We all loved to go to visit our grandparents.”*

A grandson tells this story: *“When moving to Mexico, for safe keeping, Grandfather had deposited \$20,000 in the only bank in Deming New Mexico. He put another \$20,000 on the bottom of one of the wagon beds and nailed a false bottom over the money. He drove this wagon to Mexico and used this money to build the grist mill. When he returned to Deming, to his great disappointment the bank had gone under and all his money was gone. He and his son were two sick men but there was nothing they could do about it. Well, they decided to say nothing about it and try to forget it, and this is what they did. Years after Grandfather's death, my father told me about this as we were riding the range.”*

A granddaughter comments: *“For a cool place to preserve food, an enclosed cellar was dug close to the house near the river. As the big wheel turned, the water splashed up on the enclosure keeping the room cool.”*

The Mormon community grew rapidly. Church leaders and missionaries frequently visited the Saints. Brother Stowell's friend, Apostle George Teasdale, visited often and they rode horses together. A grandson says, *“In fact, friends would say that grandfather was Bro. Teasdale's shadow.”*

A grandchild remarks, *“Grandfather enjoyed his many friends. He hired Mexican help to help with duties around the home and where needed. Although Grandfather could not speak the Spanish language very well, he usually spoke enough that they understood.”*

End of Life

The following conclusion of the life history of William Rufus Rogers Stowell is written by a grandson.

“Grandfather was very happy living in Colonia Juarez. He often mentioned how contented he was to be free from the harassment he had received in the United States due to his efforts to live the principle of plural marriage, which he accepted as the will of the Lord. He dearly loved his church and families and served faithfully in all positions in which he was called to serve.

His calling to the position of Patriarch in 1895 gave him a great deal of satisfaction, as well as the joy and happiness which came from serving in this calling

In his own words of his Life Story, he said, "So far as I can now discern the future, I shall end my days in this place till God in His Providence may order it otherwise," and he did just that. He contracted pneumonia and passed away at his home in Colonia Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, May 30, 1901, at the age of 79.

(In equal numbers and in reliable sources, the date of his death is recorded also as May 30, 1902. I assume that because it is on his grave marker as '1901' that it is the correct date. However, this is the only place that I have seen the day as May 29.)



William R. R. Stowell is buried in Colonia Juarez Mexico

**To forget your ancestors
is like a book without an author,
or a tree without a root.**

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