

BRIEF HISTORY OF WILLIAM LANEY AND ANCESTORS

(Father of Sarah Anne Laney--wife of William, Sr.)

As Written by William Laney, from Memory

I, William Laney, now begin to write from memory this first (1) day of January, 1888, as my former record was destroyed by a terrible whirlwind that came into my board shanty in the new town, called Harrisburg, in Washington County, in the Territory of Utah, in the year 1865. I had moved there from Parowan in the County of Iron, in the same Territory, where the climate was warm enough to raise cotton, tobacco, and sugar cane. Now I will write some of the most noted incidents of my life and also of my father's family, as it may be of interest to my children in days to come when I have long since been gathered home to rest from earthly labors and receive the reward of a long and a well-spent life.

I will begin with my Grandfather, John Laney, who was born in Ireland, of his place of birth I have not been informed. While yet a young man he married Margaret Means, and shortly after that they came to the United States and with them came my Great-Grandfather. I don't know what his Christian name was, but they all settled in Pennsylvania previous to the old French War, which took place in the year 1758. My Grandfather served one year under General Braddock, and under General Washington in the United States army, and was at what is known as Braddock's Defeat. When the American Revolution broke out he volunteered and served three years under General Washington. After this his father was drafted to serve in the war and he being old my Grandfather took the place of his father at the Battle of Cow Pens in the State of South Carolina and was also with General Nathaniel H. Green at the Battle of Guilford Court House in the same State, shortly after. He was also with Washington at the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at York Town in Virginia, or as the old soldiers called it, "Little York."

My Grandfather was so pleased with the climate of the Sunny South that soon after the close of the war he moved to York County, or York District, as it was then called, thinking the Bleak North not so congenial to his health. My father was then six (6) months old when they arrived in South Carolina. My mother's father, a much younger man, served also three and a half years under General Washington in the latter part of the War and was one in line of the Hollow Square around the gallows at Tappan when and where Major Andrew was hanged and he also stayed with Washington until the surrender at York Town.

My father, Culbert Means Laney, was reared in York District, South Caroline, and then moved to Logan, now Simpson County, in southern Kentucky. In the year 1811 he carried chain, blazed trees, and assisted in laying out a new county sect, Franklin City, in the same county. In the year 1812, my father married my mother, Miss Margaret Cook; and in the year 1813, enlisted to go with General Jackson, to be at the Battle of New Orleans. On the nineteenth (19th) day of December, 1815, I and my twin brother, Isaac Laney, were born in Franklin precinct, Logan or Simpson County, Kentucky. I being the first born was called William. Father, mother, and family struggled with all the hardships of a frontier life until the year 1823, when my mother died, after a long severe spell of sickness, being the mother of six (6) sons and one daughter, namely Joseph, William, Isaac, James, Hyrum, Sarah Ann, and Thomas Jefferson, who was then an infant only a few days old. After much sickness and big doctor bills, which added much to our hard struggle to make all ends meet, we had much poverty to contend with, my father came into the country on horse-back and spent what money he brought with him in his pocket for land and all else had to come from the soil through our hands, but as we raised our own cotton, wool, flax, hemp, indigo, etc., we were independent and even happy.

In the year 1824, my father married again, a Miss Margaret Williams, who was another good woman, and we were fond of her, and by her my father had three daughters and one son, namely: Elisabeth Watson, who died in infancy; John William, Frances Ellen, and Jane Laney. All except Watson lived, married and have families. But hard luck seemed to follow us, for in the year 1832 my stepmother died, and in the year 1833 my father married again, a widow lady named Frances Young Hendricks, who had twin sons named Randolph and James, whose father, Randolph Hendricks, hanged himself in a fit of jealousy, though she was an excellent woman, both wife and mother. About this time we ceased to raise our own clothing and commenced to raise tobacco and thereby sold ourselves to the merchants, for if the merchants failed we failed, and if a bank broke, we were ruined and if Europe went to war and our clothing was in Manchester, England, we were sure to suffer for it.

Thus we toiled under all the disadvantages of a frontier life; few books, few schools, no newspapers, the Bible, with the Testament, and another pious old book worth all the rest in the eyes of the Orthodoxy, was called the Westminster Confession of Faith, any house without that book was considered unorthodox and unsavable. Our school-books were Webster's Spellers, English Readers, and some others, and teachers were expected to have a Walker's Dictionary and Kirkham's Grammar, though some had neither. And as for conveniences, cook stoves were unknown at this time, when the first cook stove came into the county it caused such comment; a tailor got one to heat his irons

upon, who name was Jason Neely, and he had it in his shop where I went to get my first tailor-made suit of clothes. There came in a man called Mr. Goodnight, who also was getting a new suit of clothes made of a piece of Kentucky Jeans; he spread his arms upon the flat top of the stove - he soon jumped up, exclaiming, "I'll be damned if that thing ain't hot." Another gentleman is said to have come in having a very fine, new, fur hat, who took it from his head, sat it upon the stove and did not think, until he saw the smoke come from the inside of it, which made them wonder what was the matter with the hat.

I will here say, I remember my uncle, William Laney, moving from South Carolina, into Simpson County, Kentucky, in a two-wheeled, cart without an ounce of iron upon it, drawn by a pair of oxen, without a ring or staple on the yoke, having several cows packed with their stuff and also for the children to ride upon when tired of walking like old father Jacob when he left the services of Laban. I speak of these things to show the mode of travel customary in settling new countries in those early times. My uncle brought with him his wife, Margaret Laney, who was also his cousin, also five sons, namely. James, Julius, John Arthur, Culbert Means, and Daniel Steel Laney. At this early day this was called the Barrens of Kentucky on Barren River, and so barren was the country that my father could spread a big quilt over the top of any tree near the house and when I visited the old homestead fifty years later those trees had grown to be a hundred feet high and over two feet through.

I will here state a little about the religion of those early days. My mother, a most excellent woman, attached herself to a class calling themselves Republican Baptists, who believe in baptism by immersion and all being equal, giving persons no superiority, only the voice of the congregation. This was before Alexander Campbell or Sidney Rigdon were known of as reformers. My stepmother, Margaret Williams, who was a mere girl when the controversy arose between the Presbyterian churches that rend it asunder and all those of less combative and more passive character organized themselves into what was called the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and were few in number then, but now are very numerous, the other factions calling themselves the Old School, and New School Presbyterians.

My other stepmother, Mrs. Frances Young Hendricks Laney, belonged to what was called the Drunkards or Hell Redemptionists, because they believed Christ's blood sufficient to redeem all mankind when the utter-most farthing was paid. My father, though a non-professor, was a believer in God, and the Bible and strictly moral, far more so than many of the professors of those times, and I also was fond of the Bible, am always glad to listen to the old soldiers tell their queer old war stories and their experiences and much more glad to hear the best men of our time discuss the near approach of the millennium, as they would say, at the end of the 2000 years came the flood and at the end of 4000 years came Jesus and His apostles; at the end of 6000 years we must look for something stupendous.

But, alas, when it did come, it was not stupendous enough and few received it. It was brought to us by Elder James C-torn-tt and Peter Dustin in February, 1834, and on their way, preaching 22 miles west of us, they were mobbed out of Russelville, Logan County, and although the snow was deep and very cold, they washed their feet as a testimony against that place and people, and the next summer the Asiatick Cholerry broke out among the people and nearly depopulated the place. But I and my twin brother, Isaac, received their testimony, and on our way to Missouri in the fall of 1836, I got so terribly crippled and heavy in debt that I did not go to where the Church was at Nauvoo until 1843, my brother, Isaac, and a Benjamin Lewis with them we were traveling, tarried in Carlinville, McCoupen Co., Illinois, where I was so severely hurt that I did not get up to Haun's Mill but a few days before the terrible Massacre took place in the year 1837. There brother Benjamin Lewis was killed and buried in a well, and my brother, Isaac Laney, got away with 27 bullet holes in his shirt he had on and 11 bullet holes in his gun stock, cutting it off in his hands, 7 bullets passed through his body, some of his clothes was so nearly shot away that the ball holes could not be counted, finally the breech and old buckhorn charger of his rifle were shot away, and he then had to pour the powder into his gun from the powder horn and never knew the mistake until he found the ball did not go half way down, then a mobocrat got hold of it and discharged it, and the ragged end of the breech tore him terribly from the eye to the ear.

I struggled with hard times and poverty for five years, though very lame from the injuries I received. When a storm was brewing I got out of debt and out of Missouri and arrived at Nauvoo on July 3, 1843, and among the first things I did was get my patriarchal blessing from Patriarch John Smith. I was just in time to see the return of the Prophet Joseph Smith from Dixon, where he had been kidnapped, and I heard him preach, and he introduced the Hon. W.G. Goforth to the people, an old Congressman from St. Clare Co., Illinois, who had come to Nauvoo to see the Prophet and the Mormons.

I will necessarily have to pass over much that should be written in regard to the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum as the same is written in church history and will say the twelve with Brigham Young as President continued work upon the Temple where I labored as a carpenter until the house was so far completed that many got their Endowments therein, I among the rest. As soon as the grass grew in the spring of 1846 we were in our wagons rolling westward. Our destination no one knew, as we were going like Abraham of old to a land that God would show us, and we had implicit confidence in the words of the Prophet Brigham Young, and after much tribulations, trials, and afflictions, we arrived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, where we began to cultivate the earth, build houses and prepare to remain, believing as we did that we had found a home where mob violence would not reach us, for some time at least.

After passing starvation where we had to dig roots, sago as the Indians called it, also thistle roots that grew very plentiful along the stream we called the Jordan, however, after sufferings that could not be told and known only by those who passed through it where untold millions of large black crickets devastated our growing crops for three years after arriving in the valley. We lived by faith and what little we could obtain by the hunt where even the skins of animals were eaten with a relish by some who came to the valley by way of the Mormon battalion who were discharged on the 16th of July, 1847, and had to subsist as best they could until otherwise provided for. Well, the Lord was with the people and none of them starved to death although many went for three days and nights without food, and some of those who brought an extra supply with them from the states charged 25 cents a pound for flour.

However, after a few years food began to be plentiful by hard work and good management, through the blessings of the Almighty God, we subdued the crickets, grasshoppers and Indians. We spread out upon our farms which were allotted us by the authority of the Council of the Twelve. Some 5 acres, some 10 acres until in the Fall of 1849 the gold hunting immigration came in and we sold them our produce for clothing and farming implements as we had to leave most of our clothing and tools to the mob of Nauvoo, who drove us from our homes, and not look back and by and through the means of this gold immigrations our stores were replenished, clothing was supplied by the hands of many who were the means of our expulsions from the states, and like Joseph, we fed them when they were hungry, supplied them with fresh teams when tired and worn out, took them in and cared for them when they were sick, and sent them on their journey rejoicing.

In the fall of 1850 President Young called for a company to settle at Little Salt Lake, and 130 men with families were called for and George Albert Smith one of the Twelve Apostles was appointed to take the lead. I among the rest was chosen, also to take my family, and on the 18th of December, we left Salt Lake City to rendezvous at American Fork, and after being organized in 10s, 50s and 100s, we started on our journey not knowing how far our journey might be, but like Abraham we knew God was at the Helm, so we arrived on what was called Meadow Creek, a few miles south of Fillmore. There we spent our New Year's day of 1851, and on the 13th day of January we arrived on Center Creek, where Parowan now stands, and soon we commenced to lay off the land in 5 acres, 10 acres, and so on, as the wants of the people demanded, opened a road up the canyon which cost 600 days work before a stick of saw timber was got out, we made canals seven miles long, and long lines of fences to protect our growing crop, and many got discouraged and sought to return to the north as we were about 250 miles from Salt Lake City.

When Spring was fully come we found only 25 men and these had brought their families along intending to stay as directed by the president, we were here annoyed with Walkers Band of Ute Indians, and when they saw our numbers so small they thought to raid upon our stock, and were otherwise very saucy but we were well organized in a military capacity having many of our number who had served in the war with Mexico, and in the year 1853 we were under arms more or less for one whole year and by good management and constant watchfulness we never lost a man, and at last subdued the Indians and made them our friends. Chief Walker said he would laugh to see the wooden shoes of Sanpete Valley run, but he could not make the Iron County shoes run; however peace was restored and prosperity smiled upon our little settlement. Cedar City was located on Coal Creek, Iron works began, and many Iron workers from the old world came along, mills were built, both saw and grist mills, house building became a permanent business, farming, lumbering a steady employment, sheep, and stock raising was not forgotten, and prosperity smiled upon all the settlements of Iron County until it became necessary to extend the settlements south of the rim of the Basin.

In 1855 there was a settlement formed at Las Vegas within 250 miles of San Bernardino, Cal., but owing to bad management by Wm. Bringhurst and Nathaniel Jones it soon broke up. However, Washington was settled, and in 1860

St. George and other places were taken up, in order to raise cotton, cotton mills were built, one at Parowan by Ebinezar Hanks, and one at Washington by President Brigham Young, and for some years cotton seemed to pay well, but speculators soon found out that cotton could be purchased in the states and brought here cheaper than it could be raised here and that knocked cotton raising in the head, and killed the business. Fruit culture proved good for several years, also the raising of grapes, and making wine but after many years fruit came down to almost nothing and wine became a nuisance as it would make people drunk, and it became cried down, by all the lovers of quiet society. In the midst of all this I moved to Harrisburg where there is a most beautiful climate and made me a good home there, my family getting married and settled around me, and after many years I began to grow old, many years had passed over me in this age, and I am anxious to leave on record for the benefit of those who may come after me, a few lines to show what some of the early settlers by passed through and therefore I write a short discourse to my children, grandchildren and all who may come after me, greetings:

Harrisburg, May 5th, 1891

My dear children and grandchildren to whom these presents may come, I am now well up in my 76th year and do not expect to remain long in this state of mortality as my three score and ten, the allotted time for man, is come and passed. And as I wish to leave my Testimony with you, before I go hence, of the truth of the work commonly called Mormonism or as it should be called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints the gospel of the Son of God, revealed anew through the Prophet Joseph Smith. First I will say I have known for over fifty years by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that Mormonism is true, and is the gospel of the Son of God as spoken of in John's Revelation, 14th and 16th verse, and I also know that the Book of Mormon is the Stick of Ephraim spoken of by Ezekiel, but you may ask, why call it a stick, because writings were often rolled on sticks, to save breaking if doubled, and for that reason are often called sticks or roles. Isaiah 8th and 1st see also Zechariah 4th and 1st, Ezra 6th and 2nd, also Ezekiel 37th and 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20th verses. Also look at Isaiah 29th and 4th, this whole chapter explains about how the Book should speak low out of the ground also how Ariel or Jerusalem the city where David dwelt being brought down low and speaking low out of the ground, and out of the dust, which could only be done by bringing forth the Book of Mormon out of the ground, and truly in so doing the Lord does a marvelous work and a wonder, and I here wish to bear witness that as Jesus said that if any man will obey this form of doctrine he shall know of this being the work of the Lord, and I here must remind all my children and grandchildren as the Savior has said unless you eat of His flesh and drink His blood you have no life in you, so I wish to ask as a favor of you all that you lead your families to the fast meetings, Sabbath Meetings, Sabbath Schools, and see that they partake of the Sacrament instead of herding stock seven days in the week in order to make money, proves to me they do not know this to be the work of the Lord. It is a positive fact that a transcript taken from the Book of Mormon was handed to Professor Charles Anthon of New York City, and then returned to the Prophet Joseph and the precise words were used that were spoken by Isaiah thousands of years ago, see Isaiah 29:11-12 verses and I think more of these evidences from the Bible, than any from the Book of Mormon, or any of our Church works. So long as we have to do with those who believe the Bible.

And now my dear children and children's children, I must impress it on your minds that to be independent in this world's goods you should raise all you need to eat or wear, for no man, family, state or nation is independent that has to go into market to buy any positive necessity to eat or wear, but on the contrary they are at the mercy of the market merchant and middlemen, and I know that the United States will soon tear loose from us, and that which we cannot raise, or make, we must go without, for the nations will all be at war, and there will not be allowed any commerce by land or by sea. While thus careful for food and for raiment to sustain the body, we should not neglect to provide food for the Spirit--read the Deseret News, the Juvenile Instructor, and other Church works.

And there is also another item in raising a family of children, never allow them to be frightened with spooks, and fanciful notions of spirits, for I have known their minds to be so worked upon, that fear took hold upon them to an alarming extent that they dared not go out in the dark any place, nor ever allow children to be vexed with nick-names or any other foolish nonsense, for these tend to make children cross and pettish to all around them. But lead your little ones by the hand to Fast meetings, and all Sabbath meetings, and Sabbath Schools, and see that they have the Sacrament, also that they receive cards, books, and other prizes and they will soon acquire a taste of learning and not think of loitering around fence corners, and I pray God, my Heavenly Father, that you may be better able to teach your children than I have been, owing to old-fashioned teachers we have had here.

And now, my dear children, let me point to you a clause in the Law of Moses that provides wherein a child will

become a drunkard, or a glutton, and his parents cannot reclaim him, they shall prefer a charge to the authorities who will sentence him to be stoned to death, and his parents shall cast the first stone, and I positively believe there are as many who shorten life and injure health by gluttony as there are by hard drinking. Therefore, I wish to say to you, be temperate in eating as well as in using strong drink, or in other words, strictly observe the Word of Wisdom.

There is yet another matter much neglected among the people - I mean Patriarchal Blessings - and I wish to impress it on your minds that all Saints - male and female - as soon as they arrive at the age of from fifteen to eighteen, should have a patriarchal blessing, as it will help to buoy them up in sickness and also while on missions and in times of danger. I would also remind my children that to have property in sheep and cattle is a good investment, for while you are asleep your stock are growing and you can appoint herdsman who are not qualified so well for other kinds of business to look after them, but should you invest in wagons, harness and such like, they are always needing repairs and that is a constant outlay, and calls for cash expenses.

ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF WILLIAM LANEY

William Laney of Harrisburg, Washington Co., Utah, but at the time of the Mountain Meadow Massacre, living at Parowan, Iron Co., Utah, had formed the acquaintance of the family of Aden while on a mission to Tennessee, and was saved from a mob who threatened his life because he was a Mormon preacher. When the Francher Train reached Parowan, Mr. Laney met young Aden and recognized him as the son of the man who had saved his life. Aden told him he was hungry, that he and his company had been unable to purchase supplies from the Mormons ever since they left Salt Lake City, that it appeared as if a conspiracy had been formed against the train by which the Mormons had agreed to starve the emigrants.

Mr. Laney took young Aden to his house, gave him supper and breakfast, and let him sleep there that night, and on his departure the next morning, gave him some garden stuff to take to his train. The next day Laney was accused of being unfaithful to his obligations. They said he had supported enemies of the Church, and given aid and comfort to one whose hands were still red with the blood of the prophets. A few nights after that the "Destroying Angels," who were doing the bidding of Bishop Dame, were ordered to kill William Laney in order to save him from his sins, he having violated his endowment oath, and furnished feed to a man who had been declared an outlaw by the Mormon church. The "Angels" were commanded by Barney Carter, a son-in-law of William H. Dame, who now lives at Los Angeles, California. The "Angels" called Mr. Laney out of his house, saying that Bishop Dame wanted to see him. As Mr. Laney passed through his gate into the street, he was struck across the back of the head with a large cedar club in the hands of Barney Carter. His skull was fractured and for many months he lay at the point of death and his mind still shows the effect of the injury then received. I have frequently talked with Mr. Laney about this matter. At the Carter attempt, to take the life of Mr. Laney, the Mormon Church was under the blaze of the Reformation, and punishment by death was the penalty for refusing to obey the orders of the Priesthood. He is still strong in the Mormon faith and almost believes that Dame had the right to have him killed.

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