

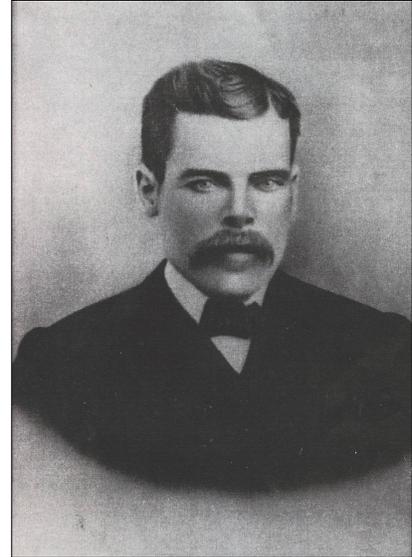
A life sketch of

Jeremiah Russell Willey

1847 – 1905

Jeremiah Russell Willey was born February 17, 1847, at Omaha, Nebraska to Jeremiah and Samantha Call Willey.

Jeremiah's father was serving in the Mormon Battalion when Jeremiah was born. When Jeremiah was about two weeks old, there was a thaw that brought water into the dugout where his mother and her children were living. The water level was shoe deep. The Willey's were moved out of the dugout into a cabin with no floor. They were given a cowhide to sit on and a large log was rolled to cover the doorway. Chips were gathered and a small fire was started to give them warmth. With their father gone, the children depended on their mother and the goodness of the church members who lived by them to meet their needs. Their living conditions and means of support were very meager.



Jeremiah's father returned in the spring of 1847 and the family moved to Little Mosquito, which was about eight miles from Kaneshville. Here they began to farm and planted a garden hoping to set provisions aside so they could travel to the Salt Lake Valley and join other members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Jeremiah traveled with his family across the plains as a young child. It took four months even with a team of oxen pulling their wagon. The family arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1851. They went to Bountiful, Utah and worked hard to establish their home. Jeremiah grew up in Bountiful surrounded by family, friends and gospel activities.

In Bountiful, Jeremiah met Annie Roberts. On March 14, 1868, they were married in the Endowment House by Daniel H. Wells.

Jeremiah built a tiny log house on what was known as the Willey Block. They lived in this little log house for 23 years. One son and eight daughters were born to them.

The Willey family consisted of:

Jeremiah Russell Jr.	January 11, 1869
Annie Everington	January 7, 1870
Samantha Audrey	February 12, 1872
Mary May	May 15, 1824
Sarah Louise	May 17, 1877
Rose Byrnina	September 27, 1881
Lorena	April 29, 1884
LaVoun	November 1887
Myrtle	April 29, 1891

Their son died when only a few days old. Their eight daughters grew to young womanhood and were all married in the Salt Lake Temple. Two of the daughters died in childbirth. Their daughter LaVoun had left a little girl nine days old, which Jeremiah and Annie took and raised as their own little girl. They gave her every care that they did their own daughters and was thought of as their own daughter.

Jeremiah worked hard farming and helping his community improve. Church service was a vital part of his life.

After 23 years of living in the Willey log home, Jeremiah, Annie and their older daughters, Annie and Samantha, began building a new rock house. It took about eight months to build as Jeremiah insisted on paying for everything that was put into it and they did as much of the work as possible. A unique feature of the house was the dressed granite quoins made from granite pieces left over from the Salt Lake Temple construction.

One morning, Jeremiah Willey went up the canyon above Bountiful to get some wood for fuel. He started off and then returned, calling his daughters who were home to come and sing one of his favorite hymns, "Oh My Father". After they sang for him he went on his way. When dusk fell, and Jeremiah had not returned, Annie grew concerned; Jeremiah was long past due. Annie called relatives and friends to search for her "Jeddy". They found him not too far into the canyon. He had died from a heart attack. It was January 26, 1905 and Jeremiah was 57 years old.

Samantha was left a widow at 51 years. All of their daughters were married at the time of Jeremiah's death with the exception of their two youngest ages, 16 and 13. Although they did not have a lot in valuable property, the family was left with a comfortable home that was paid for and no debtors seeking payments. Because of Jeremiah's service in the Blackhawk War, Samantha collected a veteran's pension, which helped her meet the family's financial requirements.

Jeremiah Russell Willey was loved by his family, admired by his neighbors and continues to be an example of hard work and dedication to the generations who follow him.

The author of this Life Sketch of Jeremiah Russell Willey is unknown.

Names, places, and dates have been verified with family genealogy information and records in possession of K. Oswald, and family history records in possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.