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Susan Clegg Biesele - June 12, 2018

My great, great Aunt Maggie (Margaret Mudd) married Asa Stanly Calkins, who was Asa and Agnas' son.

Asa Starkweather Calkins

Contributed By: MaxMaxwell · 2 April 2013 ·

ASA STARKWEATHER CALKINS Born July 5, 1809 - Died February 15, 1873  
by

Elaine aids Hagelberg

Captain John and Lucy Kellogg Calkins gave birth to a fine set of children, the boy being named Asa Starkweather and the girl, Amy Starkweather Calkins. (Amy being the older of the two) The family was living in Elizabethtown, Essex Co., N.Y. when this blessed event took place.

As a youngster Asa thrilled at the honor his father was receiving as a Captain in the militia in the war of 1812. Due to his heroic service he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and was welcomed back home as a conquering hero. How proud Asa was of his father and he delighted in boasting to the other children of how brave his father was and would often dream of growing up to be just like him.

When Asa was about 10 years old the family moved to a farm on the road to Mt. Hurricane, Essex Co., where his father served as Judge of Essex County for 10 years. In the 1830's, there was a great deal of excitement over Free Masonry in Elizabethtown, splitting the Baptist Church right in two. Captain John became involved in the Masonic trouble and due to the influence and respect he received

from his fellowmen, the Masons felt that he was their greatest enemy. In an effort to be rid of his Anti-mason policies they drew up a plan whereby they re-surveyed the town line of Elizabethtown, and Captain John living on the edge, suddenly found himself living in the town of Jay. Naturally he was compelled to vote in Jay as well as pay his taxes there. But, according to Dr. R. J. Roscoe, Captain John consoled himself and would chuckle heartily as he would tell that taxes were much cheaper in Jay than they had been in Elizabethtown.

Captain John was a very civic minded citizen and participated in civic and political betterment programs and encouraged his children to respect the importance of these programs. He made every effort to give his children a good education, and encouraged Asa to study law, which he did, and became a prosperous and brilliant lawyer in Whitehall, N.Y. On May 15, 1835, Asa took a other tremendous step in his brilliant career. At the age of 26 years, Asa, after being duly examined and regularly admitted as an attorney, became fully authorized to practice in the Supreme Court of the State of New York. This authority was given under the hand and seal of John Savage.

In 1838, Captain John decided to move his family West, and Asa decided to go with them. They moved to Ohio for a year then to Iowa City, Iowa, where Asa opened up his law office and was very successful. It was while in Iowa City that the missionaries visited their home, and after hearing them explain the gospel to them, the missionaries counseled them, that if they had a desire to know if it was true, to kneel in prayer and they would know. This the family did; and they knew at once that this was what they had been waiting for. In spite of the treatment the Saints were receiving the family joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day saints and they were thrilled with this new feeling they were experiencing.

After becoming a "Mormon" Asa's practice began to dwindle, due to the feeling against Mormonism, but he had such a good practice that he was still able to maintain a good living for his family.

Asa was ordained to the office of an Elder under the hands of Elder Sidney Roberts, on 9 March, 1848. Later he visited the body of Saints at Council Bluffs in 1849 and there was ordained to the office of a High Priest.

Asa married Maryett Simmons Barney (date not known) who bore him 9 children, all of them but one died in infancy. The one boy grew to manhood (name not known) but died shortly after his marriage.

In 1850 Asa and his family emigrated to Salt Lake Valley and he soon obtained some property on the corner of State Road (State Street) and Emigration Street (Broadway) probably in the vicinity of the Center Theater. Here he built a comfortable home, and not long after getting settled the authorities of the church, feeling that he could support another wife, asked him to take Eliza Smith. This he did but much to his sorrow, she was never able to bear children. Eliza Smith Calkin. Asa found employment as a clerk in the tithing office, and still maintained his interesting matters of a civic nature.

In 1855, President Brigham Young, Governor of Utah, appointed Asa to the position of Topographical Engineer to the Corps of Topographical Engineers of the Nauvoo Legion. He was also commissioned by Brigham Young to the rank of Lieutenant in this corps, and of the Militia of the Territory of Utah. Following in his famous father's footsteps he filled this position well, and being a man of great wisdom and patience, and with the ability to discern right from wrong he was able to do a great deal of good.

Asa enjoyed his work and was beginning to feel that he had made great advancement since his arrival in the barren valley. This feeling was short lived for in the late fall of 1855 Asa received a call to serve as a missionary in England. Making his wives as comfortable as possible and making what provisions he could for their welfare, without a cent in his pockets and only the clothes he had on his back, he left to serve his God as a missionary.

Hitching a ride on a wagon train that was returning to help bring the Saints out in the early Spring, Asa traveled to Council Bluffs, then walked to Johnson County, Iowa, where he visited his father and other members of his family. His family gave him enough money to pay his boat passage and he traveled by whatever way he could obtain to the East Coast, and then set sail for England.

Laboring in the Millennial Star Office at Liverpool, as chief clerk until Oct. 1857, he was then given the responsibility of the financial portion of the Mission from Elder Orson Pratt, who was returning home to Zion. In Feb. 1858, he was placed as President of the entire mission when Elder S.W. Richards, who had been left in charge by Elder Pratt, also was required to return home.

Like all missionaries Asa was dependent upon the hospitality of the fine saints in England. One family in particular, was that of Henry and Charlotte Catherine Lowe Perkes. They were new converts of considerable means and they opened their home to the missionaries and treated them quite royally. Asa gratefully stayed in this home a good deal and always admired their lovely young daughter Agnes Elizabeth. In as much as his home in Salt Lake was without children and the problem of building Zion was of utmost importance, it was suggested that Asa take Agnes as his 3rd wife. This he did in 1855, shortly after becoming President of the British Mission. Agnes was a talented young lady, well educated, musically inclined, and was a nurse working in a hospital in Dudley, Worcester Co.,

England. After their marriage they continued to live with her parents who were most generous in helping Asa financially. Agnes in due time presented Asa with a healthy, beautiful little daughter whom they called Amy Charlotte.

It was about this time that Asa received word that he would soon be released from his mission, having served nearly 5 years, so preparations were made to return to Utah. There were about 731 Saints desiring to journey to Utah at this time and Asa was given the responsibility of bringing them over safely. On 11 May 1860 this group sailed from Liverpool on board the Wm. Tappscott and in spite of a rather severe storm at sea landed safely in New York. The group traveled on the Rocky Mountains. (During the voyage small pox broke out among the emigrants, who had to remain several days in quarantine after arriving at New York Harbor. They finally landed 20 June and continued their journey to Florence, where they arrived 1 July, 1861.)

Asa and Agnes stopped once again to visit his family in Johnson County, Iowa and this was the last time that Asa was to have this privilege. The Calkins family loved Agnes and the baby and everyone enjoyed the short visit together.

Upon arrival in Salt Lake, Agnes and Asa went to the Endowment House where President Brigham Young sealed them for time and all eternity. It was good to be back home. Maryett and Eliza were joyous at the return of their husband and they also welcomed Agnes with open arms and were thrilled to have a baby in the home again. Asa went back to work in the Tithing Office and soon things were running rather smoothly again. Their homes were in the 13th Ward in Salt Lake City, and Asa labored just as diligently in Church activities as he had done while on his mission.

Things do not always run smoothly in the work of the Lord, and so in Oct. 1861, Asa and his family attended Conference. Sitting proudly with his family and

listening to every word spoken by the Prophet Brigham Young, Asa was suddenly shocked to hear his name being read from a list. 300 families were being called to settle the Dixie mission and to promote the cotton industry. They were given one month to take care of their business and be ready to leave. The Asa Calkins family were among the one chosen. Somewhat surprised, but pleased at this new faith and trust put in him, Asa immediately started preparation for this new adventure into this desolate region.

Selling his property, Asa purchased 3 wagons, teams and as many provisions as they could possibly take with them, not forgetting all the seed available. By the month's end they were all ready and joined the other eager Saints to start the journey. It was not exactly a happy occasion as many were leaving loved ones knowing they would never see them again. They would be over 400 miles away and at that time you just didn't travel 400 miles to visit your family.

It was a slow and tiring journey. Snow and wind kept everyone cold and uncomfortable. After traveling for about one month the group reached the forks above Toquerville, and part of the group went up the Virgin river and the rest continued on to St. George. Asa was in the group that went to St. George.

In giving this call for settlers of the Dixie Mission, Pres. Brigham Young said that he realized the difficulty, hardships and problems that would arise, so he had chosen men and women who had already proven their dependability. These people were chosen very carefully according to their occupations and talents to be sure that these new communities would have the necessary leaders. His brilliance as a lawyer, educator and civic leader spoke well for Asa. Arriving about December 1, 1861, the most appropriate site was chosen for the city and plans were laid out and survey started by Jan. 15, 1862. The lots were numbered and the numbers were put into a hat to be drawn by the heads of each family. Nearly everyone was satisfied

with the number drawn, but a few did trade about. Apparently lots were provided according to how many wives the men had; for Asa drew 3 lots which were located on the East corners of Tabernacle and First East streets.

Asa drove his wagons onto his lots, lifted the wagon beds from the running gears and placed them on the ground so that they might be lived in. He needed the running gears to do hauling of different types. The first undertaking was to plant crops. Fences were made from the willows which covered the ditch banks, to protect the crops while they grew. Asa, with the help of his wives built a small shed of these willows to make living more comfortable for his families.

Because the Mormons believe that the glory of God is intelligence, another first was to establish a school. Asa owned an exceptionally large tent which was in place 4 days after their arrival and used for public gatherings. School was started in the big tent and ran nicely for two weeks, when the big rains came and destroyed so many shelters the big tent had to be used as temporary housing for the families who had lost their homes by the floods at Tonaquint. This caused a few weeks delay in the education of the children, but school soon started again. Jabez Woodward was the first teacher, and Asa's wife Maryett was one of the early teachers in St. George. As soon as the location for the city was selected and the survey completed a meeting was held in Asa Calkin's tent on 9 Jan, 1862, and plans were laid to start construction of a stone building to be used for a school house. Asa's tent was used for a place of worship and also Joseph Orton, a London Shoemaker, gave lectures on English grammar in it.

The only wood available to the settlers was greasewood and willows, so as soon as possible a group of men went into the Pine Valley mountains to haul some down. Asa went with this group and he instantly fell in love with the beautiful valley and

vowed that he would not be happy until he owned some land up there, which he eventually did.

After obtaining property at Pine Valley, Asa kept his cows up there in the summer away from the heat. The climate and locality made a natural pasture during the hot summer days. Deer was plentiful and on each trip the men would bring home venison which tasted mighty delicious after the meager provision the Saints had to depend upon. It was impossible to keep the meat fresh, so it was shared with those who did not have any, and if any was left over it was dried.

After the crops became more plentiful Asa realized the need for a grist mill. People had to grind their corn and grain by hand if they were fortunate to have a small grinder, which a few did have, having brought them from England. Asa had one of these small ones, having brought it back when he returned from his mission.

Asa was an industrious man and could not get this need out of his mind, so as soon as he could manage it he built the first grist mill in that area. He built it on his property at Pine Valley and ground grain for all surrounding towns. Asa built and owned the mill but in order to be free to manage his affairs in St. George he hired millen to run it for him. Henry Heath was his first miller and the first grist ground in this mill was brought in by Henry Chadburn who came trudging in from his ranch 12 miles down the Santa Clara creek with a 50lb sack of grain on his back. They had just emptied the grist into the hopper when Dave Canfield came walking in from his ranch at the Mountain Meadows with 50 pounds of grain slung over his back.

Charles Bennett was the next miller hired. He was well remembered for the little rhymes he used to make up and enclose in the sack of flour. In those days people believed that if grain was stored in bins while it was too damp it was necessary to put rocks in with the grain and they would absorb the moisture and keep the grain

from molding. Ben Knell of Pinto sent some grain to the mill and forgot to take the rocks out, so when he received his flour he found the following little verse written by Charles Bennett stuffed inside the sack.

Brother Knell, Brother Knell I'd hate like hell  
With you to Dwell  
And eat your meal.

R.B. Gardner sent some grain in which contained sticks and stones, and he received the following note in return

.  
Of grinding bones, I've often read of  
Of grinding stones, I've never heard of  
But if for bread, you want me to fix 'em  
Send 'em separate and please don't mix 'em.

Years later when Asa's son Stanley was running the mill, Bill Bracken came in with some grain to be ground. Bill was in a big hurry and became impatient thinking Stanley was too slow, so he blurted out, "\*\*\*\* it Stanley, you grind so slow that I could eat the flour as fast as you grind it." "For how long" Stanley quietly wanted to know. "Until I starved to death," replied Bill.

On May 6, 1868, a citizens meeting was called to consider the possibility of starting a supply center to handle merchandise shipped from the East. Asa Calkins along with 4 others was put on the committee to draft a plan for importing merchandise and to make a report in one week. Their report favored a cooperate

organization to be a stock company, the capital stock to be \$30.00 per share. At the end of each year dividends were to be declared one half of which was held in reserve until it reached \$5,000. It took about 6 months before this group got things going, but it did work for some time and proved an important factor in the growth and development of the Southern Utah settlement.

Even though he was not a young man and his health was beginning to fail Asa labored a great deal on the St. George Tabernacle and often talked of how he hoped to be able to help in the construction of a house of the Lord which would be built in St. George, but this dream did not materialize as work on the Temple was not started until the year of his death.

Asa's health began to fail and his condition was diagnosed as rheumatic fever. Agnes used all of her nursing ability to care for him, but in those days they did not confine a person right to bed, perhaps if they had he would have lived longer, but when he felt a little better he would work at whatever light work he could. For a time he worked as a janitor. When a mission is completed it seems that all the nursing care in the world will not prolong the stay, thus on 15 Feb. 1873, Asa Starkweather Calkins died at his home in St. George at the age of 64.

Asa left to his descendants many great gifts. He set the example by serving the Lord to the fullest of his capacity; he studied hard to better himself and to achieve a fine education which he used to help others as much as possible. His life was one of industry and service to both God and his fellowmen. He was missed by many. He was loved, not only by his devoted wives and loving children, but by many whom he had helped in different ways and befriended whenever he could. We can't help but feel that he was one of God's choice sons.

Asa and Agnes Calkins were the parents of six children:

Amy Charlotte George Lena Lottie Agnes Lucy Ellen, Asa Stanley

*I CORRECT THIS LIST OF CHILDREN (S.Biesele)*

*Amy Charlotte, George William, Helena, Asa Stanley, Lottie Agnes and Lucy Ellen.*

Thanks once again to Elaine Olds Hagelberg who has compiled and researched the history of this great Pioneer ancestor

by Elaine Olds Hagelberg Journal of Angelina Calkin Farley

Asa Starkweather Calkin. He is my great grandfather, but I never knew him. He died many years before I was born, yet his name and heritage were an important part of my childhood, but he never really became alive to me until I had the opportunity of reading through the pages of his journal. He was very well educated and this in addition to his beautiful penmanship carried me on a whirlwind journey across most of the United States, and many countries of Europe. His beautiful descriptions truly made this a dream trip come true.

Asa lived only 64 years, but during this lifetime our nation fought wars; the railroad became part of our everyday life; the telegraph hummed out its messages across the country and the steam transportation and great industrial cities came into existence. Utah became a well populated and prosperous place in which to live. Many people were able to come and settle in Utah only through the help Asa gave them -- both spiritual and financial.

We are fortunate indeed to have access of records, journal and letters that were kept by Angelina Calkin Farley -- sister to Asa -- which tell of the preparation to come to Utah and the trip itself. (the following extracts are taken from the history of the Calkins family obtained by Angelina Calkin Farley from Mr. Stephen Payne of Iowa City, Iowa)

In January 1847 Asa's sister, Angelina came to live with them. She was a vary frail little women and seemed to suffer from the extreme nervousness and otherwise bad health. We shall start recording from her Journal which shows a starting date of 6 Jan. 1847. This course that she refers to so often is apparently the new cure for consumption that had just been patented. This course was apparently some sort of steam bath, or tent.