

# Charles Stapley

Charles Stapley was born 15 March 1800 in Rolvenden, Kent, England.<sup>1</sup> He was the third of four children of Henry Stapley and Elizabeth Tarbutt. Charles was a Calvinist and farm servant in County Kent. In 1822, Charles married Sarah Watson Bryant in Rolvenden.<sup>2</sup> They had twelve children. His family were farmers, and with the advent of industrialization, it was difficult for farmers to survive. Charles and his extended family decided to immigrate to Australia to find a better life as farmers.<sup>3</sup> They sailed south on the ship *Westminster*, crossed the equator then went down around the tip of Africa, Cape Horn and around to the east side of Australia where they landed at Sydney, being sixteen weeks sailing the Atlantic.<sup>4</sup> They arrived 26 June 1838 at New South Wales, Australia.<sup>5</sup>

They settled in the fertile Hunter River district and worked as tenant farmers. Sixteen years later, in 1853, Mormon missionaries baptized the family.<sup>6</sup> They worked and saved to go to America. In April 1853, they immigrated with 70 church members on the ship *Julia Ann* from New Castle, Australia. They crossed the equator on 10 May and arrived at San Pedro, California, on 12 June 1854. They then travelled to San Bernardino. Charles brought the first alfalfa seeds to San Bernardino.<sup>7</sup>

In 1858, President Brigham Young ordered the mission at San Bernardino closed and called all the Saints to Utah Territory. Charles and his father and their families left California by ox-team in the Sterling Driggs Company. They traveled via the old Spanish Trail which headed north across what is now known as Cahoon Pass to Baker, Las Vegas, then north to Cedar City, Iron, Utah Territory,<sup>8</sup> arriving 2 February 1858.<sup>9</sup>

They were asked to move south to colonize Toquerville in Washington County. When they arrived, his wife Sarah remarked, "Neither God nor the Devil will ever find us here." Charles brought the first grape vine, the first alfalfa, and the first wheat to Dixie (and probably the first alfalfa in the territory). The thimble-full of wheat from his pockets grew a half bushel the first year. They took the grain to Virgin to the grist mill to have it ground into flour.<sup>10</sup> Animal forage was scarce and that remained a problem until alfalfa (or "lucerne") was introduced into the area. It took several years before production was sufficient for their needs. When the prophet asked the members to stop growing grapes and making wine, Charles plowed his vineyard under.<sup>11</sup>

On the 1860 census, Charles was a farmer, living with his wife and three children in Toquerville. His son Charles Jr lived next door with his wife and five children.<sup>12</sup> In 1870, they lived in the same place but Charles Sr was working as a gardener and Charles Jr now had a family of eight children.<sup>13</sup> Charles Jr hauled wood for the Silver Reef Mine. On one trip, high up on the LaVerkin Creek, he ran into a ledge of gold ore. He took a sample and sent it to Salt Lake City to have it assayed. It proved good, as he suspected, but he was told by the Church authorities that the time hadn't come for the

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<sup>1</sup> Utah Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Database, 1847-1868; England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975.

<sup>2</sup> England Kent Parish Registers, 1538-1911.

<sup>3</sup> [Theancestorfiles.blogspot.com/2008/10/tanner-22-23-samuel-bryant-sarai.html](http://Theancestorfiles.blogspot.com/2008/10/tanner-22-23-samuel-bryant-sarai.html)

<sup>4</sup> Charles Stapley Sr, at [Familysearch.org](http://Familysearch.org)

<sup>5</sup> Australia, New South Wales, Index to Bounty Immigrants, 1828-1842.

<sup>6</sup> [Theancestorfiles.blogspot.com/2008/10/tanner-22-23-samuel-bryant-sarai.html](http://Theancestorfiles.blogspot.com/2008/10/tanner-22-23-samuel-bryant-sarai.html)

<sup>7</sup> History of Iron County Mission, Parowan, Utah, p. 192.

<sup>8</sup> Biography of Thomas Parkinson - Thomas Parkinson Family Collection - BYU Digital Collections

<sup>9</sup> Charles Stapley Sr, at [Familysearch.org](http://Familysearch.org)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

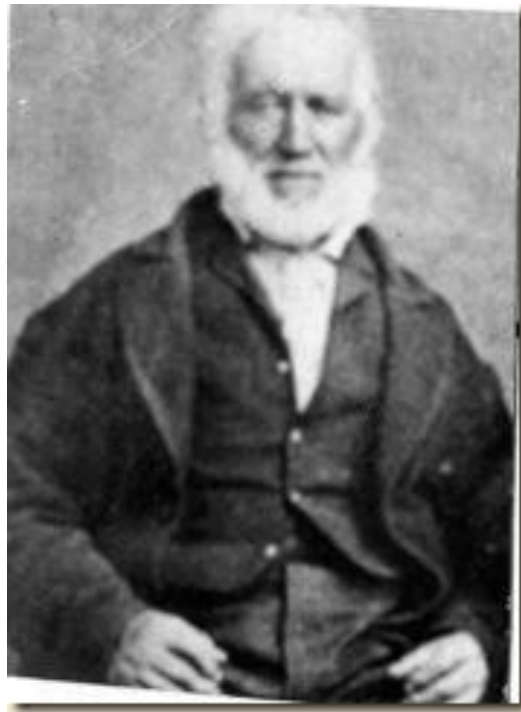
<sup>11</sup> William Stapley short history; A History of the Stapley Family; [Findagrave.com](http://Findagrave.com)

<sup>12</sup> United States Census, 1860.

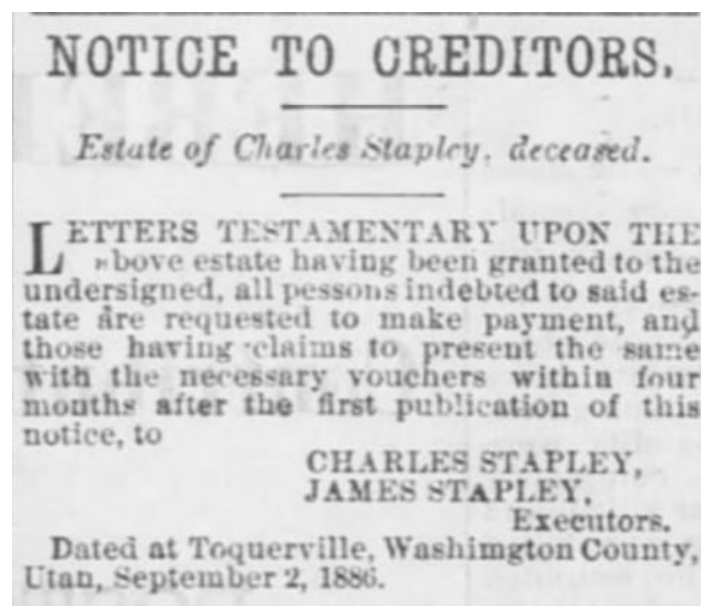
<sup>13</sup> United States Census, 1870.

Saints to have riches. Charles tried to go back to the place but for some reason he was never able to find the gold again.<sup>14</sup>

Sarah died in 1879 in Toquerville and was buried in the city cemetery. Charles Sr died 25 March 1886 in Toquerville and was buried with Sarah.<sup>15</sup>



Charles Stapley (image from *Familysearch.org*)



(Image from the *Salt Lake Herald*, 7 September 1886, p. 5)

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<sup>14</sup> A History of the Stapley Family; Family History: Lowe, by Natalie Sommer Hansen, pp. 35-40.

<sup>15</sup> Utah Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Database, 1847-1868; *Findagrave.com*.



(Image from *Familysearch.org*)

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