

John Lazear

Giovanni Pierre Lagaird was born 30 January 1841 in Inverso Pinasca, Torino, Piedmont, Italy. His family was among the Huguenots driven from Alsace Lorraine in France to the Piedmont Valley in northern Italy.¹ He was the third of four children of Pietro Lagaird and Catherine Ribet, two of whom died as children. His mother died when Giovanni was five years old and his father remarried and had two more children, both of whom died as infants.²

1850 Lorenzo Snow, Joseph Toronto (a native Sicilian), and Thomas B H Stenhouse entered the Piedmont Valley in the mountains of Italy to proselyte the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were not welcomed and had to hide and hold secret meetings. The Lagaird family was one of the families who helped them. One hundred eighty-seven people were converted. When a ship came to take the missionaries home, the Lagairds and other benefactors who had joined the Mormon Church, were invited to come with them to America. Twelve families eventually immigrated to America and settled in the Great Salt Lake Valley.³

Giovanni's stepmother died in childbirth in 1852 and Giovanni, his father, and his sister Catterina decided to immigrate to America. They left Italy on 28 November 1855 with the third company and travelled to England. They sailed from Liverpool to New York City on the ship *John J Boyd*,⁴ using the Perpetual Emigration Fund. The little family changed their names to John, Catherine, and Peter Lazear. They rode the train to Florence, Nebraska, stopping at Chicago and St Louis. They left Iowa City on 9 June 1856 and crossed the plains to the Great Salt Lake Valley, travelling with the Edmund Ellsworth Company.⁵

John's father died in Echo Canyon, just short of the valley. Orphaned John arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley on 26 September 1856⁶ and was cared for by the Thomas and Jane Allman family until his marriage. Shortly after John's arrival, this family moved and took him to American Fork, Utah, Utah Territory.⁷ On the 1860 census, he is living with this family in Lake City, Utah, Utah Territory.⁸ The family then moved to Provo, Utah, Utah Territory, where Brother Allman supervised the building of the Provo Tabernacle (now the Provo City Center Temple). John was baptized into the Mormon Church in 1866.⁹

John worked in a salt mine, mining salt for the cattle and horses. A cave-in caused a team of horses and wagon to run over him, breaking his back. He walked stooped over the rest of his life.¹⁰ In 1870, he was naturalized as a citizen at the Utah District Court.¹¹ He married Margaret "Marge" Stark in 1873 in a little log church on Temple Square that John had helped to build. She was a Scottish

¹ *Payson Roundup*, 20 November 2007; *The Mormon Waldensians*, by Diane Stoke, 1985, p. 1.

² *Familysearch.org*

³ *Payson Roundup*, 20 November 2007.

⁴ New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957.

⁵ Pioneer Overland Travel Database, 1847-1868.

⁶ Pioneer Overland Travel Database, 1847-1868.

⁷ Thomas Allman Family History, by Thomas M Allman et al, at *Familysearch.org*

⁸ United States Census, 1860.

⁹ *Familysearch.org*

¹⁰ *pinestrawhs.org/p18.html*; *Payson Roundup*, 20 November 2007; *The Mormon Waldensians*, by Diane Stoke, 1985, p. 1.

¹¹ Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955.

convert; they had ten children.¹² They were sent to St George to help build the temple there.¹³ They lived in Washington City.¹⁴ On the 1880 census, John was a farmer, living with his wife, three children, and his sister-in-law in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory.¹⁵

The next year, John was called to settle Pine Valley, Gila, Arizona.¹⁶ They travelled to Mormon Lake and onto Nash Point, where the wagon boxes had to be lowered by ropes. Leading the oxen and horses down the Rim, the group arrived in Pine Valley in October 1881.¹⁷ They lived in a dugout while building a log cabin, which became the heart of the big house, still standing today.¹⁸ John was a registered voter in Gila County from 1896 to 1908.

On the 1900 census, John was living with his wife and eight children in Gila, Arizona Territory.¹⁹ They continued to live and farm in Pine.²⁰ Marge died of old age and dropsy in 1933 in Pine, Gila, Arizona, and was buried there. John died of old age on 10 April 1937 in Pine, Gila, Arizona, and was buried near Marge.²¹



John and Marge Lazear (Image from *Familysearch.org*)

¹² pinestrawhs.org/p18.html

¹³ *Payson Roundup*, 20 November 2007.

¹⁴ *The Mormon Waldensians*, by Diane Stoke, 1985, p. 1.

¹⁵ United States Census, 1880.

¹⁶ *Arizona, Payson, Obituaries, 1948-2008*.

¹⁷ *Payson Roundup*, 20 November 2007.

¹⁸ pinestrawhs.org/p18.html

¹⁹ United States Census, 1900.

²⁰ United States Census, 1910, 1920, 1930.

²¹ *Arizona Deaths, 1870-1951*.



John and Marge Lazear with child (image from *Familysearch.org*)



Lazear home in Pine, Gila, Arizona as of 1999
(image from *pinestrawhs.org/p18.html*)