

Autobiography of Robert Knell

ROBERT KNELL (1828-1916)

Robert Knell

Mary Crook Knell

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT KNELL

John Corke Knell

Rhoda Fry

I am the son of John Corke Knell and Rhoda Fry. My father was the son of Charles Knell whose wife's name was Susan. Charles Knell, my grandfather, was born 6 December 1758, and died 16 April 1822. His wife, Susan, was born 30 August 1759, and died 4 July 1813. They were buried at Wattingbury near Maidstone, Kent, England.

My father was one of nine children, and was born 29 May 1792, in Kent, England. He died 7 March 1847, at Redbridge, and was buried in Millbrook Churchyard, Hants. My father married Rhoda Fry of Newport, Isle of Wight. Mother was born 11 March 1793, and died in Newport, 24 July 1867. Aged 74 years.

I am the fourth child of my parents, and have five brothers and three sisters. Our names are Thomas, John Corke, Catherine, Robert, Charles, Susanah, Benjamin, Rhoda, and Walter. Thomas Knell, my oldest brother, was living in New York in 1849. He had a wife and one or two children at that time. My second brother, John Corke, went to Australia. He died in Victoria in May 1867, leaving a wife and seven children.

Catherine married Henry C. Knell, son of my Uncle Tom. They came to the United States and lived in Missouri. Her husband died in St. Louis, December 1865. My sister went back to England in 1867 and now in 1892 is living in Southampton, England. She has no children.

My brother, Charles, came to the United States in 1851. He lived in Missouri. He married Emily Lewis of Kentucky. He returned to England about 1865. His wife, Emily, died and was buried in Newport, Isle of Wight, England, where he now lives and has married another wife. He has five daughters living and has buried one son, Charles Lewis.

Benjamin came to Utah in 1852. He now lives in Pinto (1892). Susanah married Robert Stringer in Dublin, Ireland and has no children. Rhoda died in Millbrook, 20 March 1837, aged five months. Walter, the youngest of the family, died in Southampton, in the winter of 1889. He never married.

I was born 22 September 1828, in Millbrook near Southampton, England. In December 1842, I lived at Cambridge in a linen draper's shop. I lived there until February 1845. In March 1845, I went to Romsey Hants and was there until July. Then I went home to Redbridge Hants, my parents having moved there. Father was

then land steward for Sir John Barker Mill. In October 1845, I went to live at Watford, Hertfordshire, 15 miles from London. While there I was assistant to my cousin, Alfred Knell, grocer. My father died while I was living there, March 1847. Charles was living at Watford then. We both went home to Father's funeral.

While living at Watford I first heard the gospel about 1 October 1848. Thomas Margets, the President of the Branch, was the first Elder I heard preach. I was baptized on the 17 October 1848 by R.B. Margets. On the 1 of April 1849 I went to Conference in London. On the 22 July I again went to Conference where I saw Brother Orson Pratt--one of the Quorum of the Twelve. Elder John Banks was the President of the London Conference. After a short visit home to Millbrook I went to Liverpool and embarked on the ship JAMES PENNEL for New Orleans, 1 September 1849, and left the docks the next morning. There were on the ship 236 passengers, and after a fine passage we arrived in New Orleans 21 October 1849. There were three deaths on the sea. On the 25 of October I went on board the UNCLE TOM for St. Louis, Missouri. I arrived there November 2d. I lived in St. Louis about five months. I worked in a pork house about four weeks and was barkeeper at the Broadway Hotel the rest of the time. On the 5th of April 1850 I left St. Louis on the TUSCUMBIA for St. Joseph. At Oregon, Missouri, I met with Brother Lorenzo D. Young and made arrangements to cross the Plains with him. I herded sheep on the Little Tarkio for him until about the middle of May, when we started for Salt Lake Valley. On the first of June we crossed the Missouri at old Fort Kearny.

I drove a herd of about four-hundred sheep across the Plains on foot and arrived in Salt Lake City, 2 September 1850. I went to Ogden and worked about one month. Afterward I lived with Edward Phillips in Kaysville. I was ordained a Seventy under the hands of Brother Joseph Young, Sr. and Zera Pulsipher on the 27 November 1851 at the house of Bishop Kay, Kaysville, Davis County.

I received a patriarchal blessing from Father John Smith, 31 January 1853. I married Mary Crook, daughter of William and Margaret Crook, born at Plymouth, England, 23 July 1822. We were married by Samuel Henderson, Jr., 23 February 1855, in Kaysville, Davis County. Mary Crook was married in England to Elias Eagles and came to Nauvoo in April 1845 and moved to Burlington, Iowa. Mary had four children, Mary Ann, born in Nauvoo, 5 November 1845; Elizabeth, born in Burlington, 22 September 1847; Joseph, born 1 June 1849. He died the same day. Josephine was born 24 November 1850. She died September 1, 1851. Both children were buried in Burlington, Iowa. Mary with her two children, left Burlington in the spring of 1852 and arrived in Salt Lake City in September. She lived most of the time in the city supporting herself and her children by sewing. Her first husband never came to Utah, and we have never heard what became of him.

We received our endowments in the Endowment House, Salt Lake City, 2 April 1857. I was chosen one of the Council in the 55th Quorum of the Seventies by Samuel Henderson, Jr., the president of the Quorum. Our oldest girl, Susanah Catherine, was born 24 November 1855.

At the time the U. S. Troops came to Utah, during President Buchanan's administration, it was decided by the First Presidency that the people north of the Point of the Mountain in Salt Lake County should move south. Accordingly, I began to move by taking Mary and the children to Salt Lake City, 18 April 1858. Our second child, Rhoda Ann, was born on the 7 May in the 14th Ward in Salt Lake City. I continued to move my provisions, etc. from Kaysville and on the 18 May we left the city for the south. At this time I did not know where we were going, but it being counseled to move, I started, leaving my home and all that I could not move with my team, which consisted of a yoke of cattle and an old wagon.

While in the city I attended meetings in the Tabernacle several times, and there on 24 April 1858, Alfred Cummings, the new governor of Utah (Brigham Young had been governor up to this time) made his first appearance in public and spoke to the people. President Young said he wished all those who felt that they were oppressed and wanted to go with the stranger to rise to their feet, only four stood up. The congregation was about three-thousand. Brother Brigham and Brother Kimball spoke to the people in the afternoon, and counseled to move south, as it was better to burn everything than to let our enemies take possession of our homes.

When I left the city for the south taking my wife and children, the baby was only ten days old. The weather was very windy and cold. My wife suffered much with Sun pain. We stayed at Willow Creek (Draper) and on the 3 June 1858, camped at Mountainville (Alpine) where I made a dugout and covered it with brush, sleeping in the wagon box.

Commissioners were sent by the U. S. to investigate affairs in Utah. President Young met them in the city about 12 June and arrangements were made that the U. S. Troops should come in and the people were counselled to return to their homes. The troops passed through the city on the 27 June 1858, and camped near Bingham Canyon. I was in Kaysville caring for my crops at the time I received the word to return. I went back to Mountainville, and on the 6 July we all started for Kaysville and arrived home on the 8th at about 5 p.m., having travelled over six-hundred miles with my oxen since I left Kaysville on the 18 April. While living in Kaysville, I was clerk of the ward from 1854, when William Kay was appointed bishop until I moved South in 1862. While living in Kaysville I was watermaster several years, also one of the ward teachers, and was principally engaged in farming.

My brother, Benjamin, went to Iron County as one of the Indian missionaries under Jacob Hamblin in the spring of 1854. He came up from Pinto Creek on a visit and on the 24 April 1861 he returned, staying with us only four days. On the 1 October 1861, Benjamin came up again. He married Ann Green on the 11 October and went back to Pinto on the 14 October. He proposed to me to move south which I agreed to do in the spring. My son, Robert Charles Knell, was born in Kaysville, 30 January 1861. On the 11 March 1862, I wrote to Benjamin, telling him I would move down as soon as I could sell my place. After having settled everything I left Kaysville on 28 May 1862 with my family and all my goods viz. wagon, one yoke of oxen, four cows, and seven sheep, hauling in the wagon all my worldly goods which was not a very big load. We arrived in Pinto 23 June 1862, without any accident or trouble on the way. On the 6 January 1863, my daughter, Cornelia Eveline, was born. On Sunday, 11 January a Sunday School was organized. I was appointed superintendent. On January 20th, 1863, I commenced to teach a day school. Pinto, at this time was a part of the Cedar Ward, Brother Henry Lunt being our bishop.

Isaac Riddle married Mary Ann, our oldest daughter, 29 August 1863. Elizabeth, our second girl, was married to Prime Coleman in November 1864. Clara Antoinette Knell was born 27 April 1865. In 1867 Pinto was organized as a ward. R.S. Robinson, Bishop, with Amos G. Thornton and Benjamin R. Hulse, counsellors. I was chosen clerk. On 1 December 1869, Eveline was taken sick with typhoid fever and died on the 10th and was buried on the 12th. Rhoda, R.C., and Susey all had the same fever that winter and the next spring, but through our faith and prayers and attending to the ordinances were all restored to health. During these years I continued farming, dairying, etc., and was greatly blessed with health, peace, and prosperity with the above exception.

Bishop R.S. Robinson moved to Upper Kanab early in 1876. On the 18th day of June 1877 I was ordained Bishop of Pinto Ward by Brother Wilford Woodruff. Susanah Catherine married Daniel Gillies of Beaver, 28 March 1877. They were married in the Temple at St. George by Brother Erastus Snow. They went to live at Beaver. My daughter, Rhoda Ann, was married in the St. George Temple, 20 June 1877 to David H. Cannon. On Saturday, December 1st, 1877, we went to Beaver. December 4th I received my full papers of naturalization from Jacob Boreman in the District Court, and arrived home on the 9th of the month bringing Susey with us. Susey's first child, a daughter, was born 28 January in our house at Pinto. Brother Isaac Riddle and Mary Ann came to see us 6 April 1878. We started with them to St. George the next day to attend to the sealing ordinances expecting to meet Elizabeth Coleman. Not receiving our letter she did not meet us. We went to the Temple April 10, and Mary Ann, Susey, Joseph, and Josephine were sealed to us. Rhoda Ann's daughter, Eveline Knell Cannon was born on the same day. May 12, 1878, Susey returned to Beaver with her husband after being here about five months.

On 16 June we met Elizabeth Coleman in St. George and attended to the sealing in the Temple. Elizabeth went to Upper Kanab in the fall of 1877; Brother Prime Coleman was dairying for the Canaan Stock Co. They moved to Bush Valley, Arizona, in the fall of 1881. Elizabeth died there, 26 March 1883, leaving six children, the youngest twelve hours old.

My son, Robert C. Knell, was called on a mission to Great Britain in 1887, and left home on 5 November, and arrived in Liverpool, 2 December, and he was appointed to labor in the Sheffield Conference, after about one year, and then in the London Conference until he was released to return home. He left England, 16 November 1889, arriving home on the 10 December. While in England he visited my brother, Charles, in the Isle of Wight; my brother and sister, Walter and Kate, in Southampton, and my sister, Susan Stringer, in Dublin.

My wife was afflicted with rheumatism in the spring 1889, and in 1890 she had to use crutches. In 1891 she fell and hurt her back and was not able to help herself, but afterwards got better and could use her crutches again, but never was able to walk without them. In the house she could move by the chairs, tables, etc. In May 1897 her appetite failed and on the 3 June she did not get up in the morning, and on the 4th she died at 10 p.m. and on the 6th she was buried in the graveyard at Pinto, beside her daughter, Eveline, after seven years of great affliction.

In December 1896 our grandson, Willard Coleman, with his wife and child, came to see us, and stayed six days. They were living at St. Johns, Arizona. Willard afterwards moved to Bush Valley, where he was killed by lightning in the summer of 1898. His wife and children moved back to St. John. He left three little girls.

My son, Robert C. Knell, married Isabelle Forsyth, daughter of Neil D. Forsyth, in the Temple at St. George, 22 September 1893, Brother David H. Cannon performing the ceremony. My daughter, Clara Antoinette, was married by David H. Cannon in the St. George Temple to Edward J. Palmer, son of Richard Palmer, 6 September 1898. They have three children at this date, February 1, 1905.

In October 1903 I went to live in Cedar with Clara, and I went back to Pinto in June 1904. After spending the summer in Pinto I returned to Cedar, 12 November 1904. December 22 I went to Pinto to spend the Holidays and enjoyed my visit, returning to Cedar 3 January 1905. On March 2d I went over to Pinto on a visit. July 1st I came over to Pinto with Brother E.J. Palmer. He went on to Lund the next morning. We had a good time on the Fourth, meeting, racing, dancing. On the 19th Eva Cannon came up to Pinto from St. George. July 23, Brother E.J. Palmer came over from Cedar bringing Clara and the three children. A good time was had in Pinto on the 24th. A procession, meeting, public dinner, dancing, etc.

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The last entry in the diary was for October 6, 1912.

"We have had a stormy week, rain, and snow most of the time. Clara came home from the farm at Paragona last night. All well."

Grandfather Knell spent the winters in Cedar City with mother from 1903 until 1906 or 1907, when he moved from Pinto to our home where he lived until 1916. That year he moved to St. George to live with his daughter Rhoda Cannon. He died 16 December 1916, and was buried in the Pinto cemetery. (*Endnote by Rhoda Palmer Jones*)