

BIOGRAPHY OF FRANCILLE DURFEY

PIONEER OF 1847

Third Place
Junior Division
1958

By
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Francillo Durfey Senior, my Great Great Grandfather, was born May 12, 1812 at Lincoln, Addison County, Vermont. He was the son of Ebenezer and Sarah Newton Durfey. He grew to manhood in the state of Vermont, where he attended school and obtained a good education for those days.

He married Marion Jones and from this union there were five children, three boys and two girls. He heard the gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints preached. He became converted and was baptized in January 1840, and moved to the body of the church at Nauvoo, Illinois the same year.

During the mob violence on the Saints in Nauvoo, Great Great Grandfather was away ~~for~~^{for} supplies; his cattle were stolen, his home burned, and his wife and children put out in the snow. His wife being ill with a new baby caught cold and died three days later.

Great Great Grandfather and his children crossed the Mississippi River with the first company of saints and started for the Rocky Mountains.

When the call came for him to join the Mormon Battalion, he left his family with the Saints and joined the historic group of soldiers known as the Mormon Battalion July 16, 1846 at Council Bluffs, Iowa under Captain James Brown in company C

They lived in tents, pitched in military order. Four days later, July 20th, they started for Fort Leavenworth arriving there August 1, 1846. They were equipped with arms and supplies at Fort Leavenworth, and departed from there September 14, 1846, and arrived at Santa Fe October 9, 1846.

It was here that Great Great Grandfather along with about ninety other men, who had all become ill were ordered to go to Pueblo for rest and medical treatment. This detachment was to winter at Pueblo. They took up the line of march October 18, 1846.

On November 9th they reached the Arkansas River. Captain Brown and others went to Bront's Fort to get sixty days provisions. On November 17, 1846, they reached their destination.

On the 18th of May 1847 Captain Brown received money for the soldiers and order to march to California. The wagons were loaded and the line of march taken up on the 20th of May.

On the 11th of June, while on Polo Creek, the detachment were met by Amasa M. Lyman, of the quorum of the Twelve apostles and others from Winter Quarters bringing letters from families and friends.

The command of which Great Great Grandfather was a member made an early start on the 17th of June, 1847, with a view of overtaking a company of pioneers making their way westward. The pioneers were twelve days ahead of them. They failed to overtake them but arrived in the Salt Lake Valley July 27, 1847, three days after the company of pioneers.

My Great Great Grandfather opened by prayer the first meeting held in Salt Lake City in the old bowery.

Because of his trade as a cooper, his ability to speak the Indian language, and his marksmanship as a hunter, he was called by President Brigham Young in the fall of 1847 to assist four companies of Saints across the plains.

It was on one of these trips that he met Cynthia Harrington Bowen. She had buried her husband on the plains with cholera. *My Great Great Grandfather assisted her family of four children to Salt Lake where they were married February 16, 1849 by President Brigham Young.*
My Great Great Grandfather was a natural colonizer, and a wise and prudent stockman. He understood people and was obedient to those in authority. Thus he was called many times to help open new frontiers.

The first call was in October 1848. With his mixed family, consisting of five of Great Great Grandfather's and four of Great Great Grandmother's children they moved to Weber county along with four other men and their families making an addition of twenty-three persons. They located for the winter in some log cabins situated near the junction of the Ogden and Weber rivers near where the Mount Fort School now stands. Here Francillo Durfey Jr, my Great Grandfather was born on February 1, 1850.

In the spring of 1850, Francillo Durfey, George and Frederic Barker, David Moore, Amos Andrews and Clinton Bronson secured farms at the Mound Fort Settlement and joined with the Shaws, Chases, and Hubbards in enlarging the ditch dug the previous year from the Ogden River.

On February 6, 1851 the General Assembly of the state of Deseret incorporated Ogden City. It was to become the second largest settlement in Utah. A city council consisting of a mayor, four aldermen, and nine councilors was created to direct the affairs of the new city. The first officers of Ogden City were appointed by Brigham Young and members of the legislature of the State of Deseret in an election on April 7, 1851. Francillo Durfey Sr. was elected alderman.

The winter of 1851 was a hard one for the settlers of Ogden. The snow was deep and it was bitter cold. Some of the cattle froze to death.

Food was scarce and Indians were troublesome. For the protection of the settlers the first company of the militia in Weber County was organized with Cyrus C. Canfield Captin and Francillo Durfey Sr. as first lieutenant.

In the year 1855 the church called a number of families on a mission, among the Indians on the Salmon River. Great Great Grandfather was among the ones called. They left May 19, 1855. They settled on the Lemhi, a branch of the Salmon River in Idaho. That part of the country was well adapted to cattle raising; so Great Great Grandfather went into the cattle business quite extensively, and was prospering very well. But the Indians became envious and finally made a raid on the white settlers and stole all their cattle. Because of the hostilities of the Indians, on the 28th of March 1858, the whole company left Fort Lemhi. Their mission was closed and they returned to Ogden. Out of the thirty-five head of cattle my Great Great Grandfather trailed three hundred and thirty-three miles he returned with only one cow whose young calf was too weak to travel.

Once more they were back in Zion but their stay was a short one.

The following year President Brigham Young again called for volunteers to help in the settling of Cache Valley. Great Great Grandfather answered the call. Three towns were settled in the autumn of 1859. He chose Providence for his families next home.

He worked as a cooper and also tilled his farm. He was active in church and civic affairs in the settlement of Providence and Cache Valley.

After nine years of living in Cache Valley Great Great Grandfather's children were all married and they were in need of homes and land. As Cache Valley was pretty well all taken up it became necessary for them to seek new frontiers. So in the spring of 1868 he moved with his family to the site now known as Beaver Dam. Being the first to settle there he engaged in farming and stock raising.

At that time it was a cattleman's paradise. The hills were covered with beautiful mountain grass and beaver had built a natural dam in the creek after which the village derived its name.

His eventful life came to a sudden but peaceful close February 15, 1871, at Beaver Dam. He was buried in the Providence cemetery; where each memorial day a large American flag gently floats over his grave, placed there by the American Legion in memory of a noble soldier and an honored pioneer.