

Concise Biography of John R. Young

On the last day of April, 1837, Lorenzo Dow Young and Persis Goodall had a baby boy. They named him, John Ray.

The Kirtland days of the Church were ending. By June there was persecution of the faithful. By October, Lorenzo had taken his family to Far West, Missouri. They had traveled with Isaac Decker and his family. Lorenzo bought a large farm from a Missourian, and made it into a productive enterprise. But hate showed in the old settlers there, and within two years, Lorenzo and his family were living in Nauvoo.

when John R. was about five years old, he came down with chills and fever until he was quite feeble. "One day," writes Elder Young, "father had taken me out for a little exercise and sunshine. While walking, we met the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum Smith and also Sidney Rigdon. Joseph asked if I was the little son the Elders had been requested to pray for. Being answered in the affirmative, he took the hat from my head, ran his fingers for a moment through my curly locks and then said: 'Brother Lorenzo, this boy will live to be a man and will help carry the gospel to the nations of the earth.' I believe I grew stronger from that minute."

Lorenzo and his family were among the first over the river when the Nauvoo exodus began. The cold weather that had frozen the river so well, turned warm, and the road in Iowa became almost a mud trap. When Brigham named those to go pioneering in 1847, Lorenzo was on the list. But Lorenzo, who had now married Harriet Decker, worried about her. She had tuberculosis, and the Iowa weather was bad for her. She and Lorenzo enthusiastically claimed they would be a help, not a hindrance. Brigham said it would be okay, and he and Heber C. Kimball then included their wives on the list also. John R. was not included; he and his brother, Franklin W., came west in Jedediah M. Grant's company the next year. The pioneers lived in a fort west a few blocks of where the temple now stands. Lorenzo built a two-room log cabin east of the fort (where the Beehive House is). He was the first to move his family out of the fort.

In April conference of 1854 John Ray was called on a mission to the Sandwich Islands. He received his endowments at the Endowment House on March 14th. He stayed with relatives until a group was ready to go south. John (Johnnie) was sixteen, but not large. He weighed 96 pounds fully dressed. At Cedar City his father and uncles greeted him. Everyone had advice. From there, Parley P. Pratt led the group. At San Bernardino, they rested for three weeks. Members took them 80 miles to the port, and the group progressed to San Francisco. With the ticket money, President Pratt bought a sailing ship, and employed a captain. Then the captain absconded with the ship. All

the missionaries hired out as farm hands to earn money to get to the Islands; except for Johnnie; he was too small. So he tracted the city. He encountered a cook who had stayed one time with Johnnie's family. Nice. But the owner came in and started a fight with Johnnie, who threw him on his back. The bystanders were so entertained by all that, they bought him lunch, and bought his books. The next day, Johnnie was assigned to placate a husband who was sure his wife was insane because she liked Mormons. He vowed to shoot any Mormon who came to his door. Johnnie went there and hired on as their cook. After a month, the man discovered that Johnnie was a Mormon, and he was flabbergasted. He then handed Johnnie forty dollars, his agreed wages, and Johnnie left.

Johnnie was seasick all the way to the Sandwich Islands, or Hawaii. The mission put him to work doing errands for the mission tin shop. Elder Young, as he was now called, asked to proselyte. The president took him to a village and left him with members. The next week he met man on the road, trying to get a donkey and cart up a small hill. He beat on the donkey. The animal refused to move. Elder Young walked up to the donkey, petted it and talked kindly to it, and it followed him right up the hill. Elder Young's next transfer brought him to a member's home. But the fleas were awful. So he spent a lot of time out by the seashore. There, the bright sun and sea made him almost blind. He had a thought that when fast day came, he would pray and get healed. After all the family had gone, Elder Young was alone in the house, and prayed about his eyes. Looking up, he saw a vision of Joseph and Hyrum coming to visit. How nice! Joseph said, "Hyrum will bless you." They left; the vision ended. Elder Young came to himself outside in the yard, looking where they had gone. His eyes had been healed.

Elder Young got a companion for his next transfer. They held a meeting, assisted by a native elder. That fellow gave a poor talk; the companion gave a good talk. Elder Young finished exhorting baptism. Eight asked for baptism. His blessing that he would be fluent in the language had come to pass. After that, he changed islands, and had his cousin, Henry P. Richards, for his companion. Elder Young was made conference (district) president. By the time he was nineteen, he had been working on Molokai. (He still got seasick whenever in a boat.) On that island, people were indifferent, and Elder Young many times went hungry. When he had a letter ready to mail, he had to work a day to get money for a stamp. His mission assignments often required walking up to forty miles in a day, and swim to cross wild, fast rivers. He also fashioned his own pair of shoes from a used pair.

With the new year, Elder Young found himself in Honolulu. There he found a tourist, John Hyde, a brother of Orson Hyde. John had been in the church, but was then apostate. Elder Young listened to John

preach, to see if he had any logical reason for apostasy. He had none, just the false old tales that get repeated. One time John Hyde said: If polygamy is an eternal law, why didn't God give Adam twelve wives? Elder Young rebutted with: If He had done so, making a woman from a rib of Adam, Adam would hardly have any bones left in him.

Elder Young also met a cousin of his mother, a Mr Goodale. Elder Young also worked closely with Elder Edward Partridge, Jr., who had all the qualities of personality that his father had.

Elder Young was released in October of 1857, but had to find work so he could buy a ticket home. It was December before he left. The year 1858 was only days away when Elder Young got to San Francisco. A cousin there (the state attorney general) offered to school him in the law, and give him a good start in life. Elder Young refused. He also met two men intent on visiting Salt Lake City to sell the church land in Central America. In spite of Elder Young's cautions, they went anyway.

Persecution was hot in San Francisco. And people remembered Johnnie from years past, and now wanted to kill him. So he and his companions took a stage to the redwoods. There, a man at a sawmill told them, "I know that fellow; you're Johnnie Young. I saw you in a dream last night." The man's wife was antagonistic, but Johnnie taught her, and baptized her. And after holding a meeting for interested people, he baptized more. By the first of March, the sawmill man and the returning elders -- there were 13 -- started for Salt Lake City. They veered south to avoid the mountains, for it was still spring. Johnnie hunted as they traveled; this supplied them with meat. He then went with a faster wagon train -- the one where the men were who wanted to sell land in Central America to the church. On the way with them, he met a few Indian missionaries also. Just days before the train got to the southern Utah settlements, Indians raided them. Johnnie talked in the Ute language to the Indians and stopped the deprivations. Further on, they encountered people traveling south en masse; Johnston's Army had come to Salt Lake City. People were fleeing south. For Johnnie, having been released in October, now he was home; it was June.

What to do with his life, now? John helped move his father's families back home from the south. Then he assayed to go to San Francisco -- the offer from his cousin to become a lawyer seemed a proper course to take. He happened to tell Uncle Brigham about his plans. His uncle told him: "No; that will not do. Get married and make a farm." John decided to stay. The next day another uncle told him he had arranged for him to speak to a group of young people in Draper the coming Monday evening. He spoke, and during his speech a young lady came in and took a seat on the front row. A voice told John, "That is your wife." She left right afterward, but sought out

the speaker and found him at his uncle's. She later said that she had some poor luck in romantic affairs, and had prayed for comfort. That night she had a vision of a laughing boy with rosy cheeks, and a voice said, "See, your husband." She had seen that face pass (as he went to the meeting in a carriage), and had gone to the meeting. In a matter of months, they married. The lucky girl was Albina Terry; after a number of months living with relatives, they set up housekeeping and farming in Payson, Utah county. The couple had a son. The farm went well. The next year, 1860, John married another girl, Lydia Knight -- a daughter of Newell Knight. She knew well how to make hats.

In 1861 he was called on a mission to Dixie. That meant moving to southwestern Utah. At Santa Clara he bought an Indian farm, and got it ready by putting a fence around it. But a few days after that, a flash flood washed away his work. It flooded the interior of the fort the people had made as protection against Indian raids. Inside the fort, the water reached your armpits. The current going past the fort was too strong to stand in. The men tied a rope to a post up a hill where it was safe from the water. They brought the rope end to the fort, and evacuated most of the women and children. The flood next undermined a corner of the fort, and Ira Hatch's part of the fort fell into the enlarged river. The next day after sundown, John R. held a lamp for Jacob Hamblin to be able to see to move a large pile of firewood. But the ground under Jacob (in the fort) gave way, and Jacob found himself grabbing onto tree roots so he wouldn't be washed away. John called for help; Jacob was rescued. It was three days before the water subsided to allow near-normal life. The fort had been mostly washed away; the little town was in ruins. Apostle Erastus Snow located a safer locale and laid out a town plat. The settlers started over.

In 1862, again responding to a call from the Church authorities, John R. went to Omaha to gather the poor, crossing the mountains and plains in Captain John R. Murdock's company, driving his own team of four yoke of cattle. Returning, he was captain of a Church train, consisting of thirty wagons, which left Florence on August 17, 1862, and reached the Great Salt Lake City on October 29, 1862; it was the last train of the season. [His book, pg 121, notes that he brought back a cotton gin.] In 1863 he was again called to the States and drove his own team in Captain Daniel McArthur's company. On reaching Florence he was appointed captain of a Danish Independent company of forty wagons, which left Florence on July 7, 1863, and reached Great Salt Lake City on September 12th of that year. During the journey across the plains the company had a fearful stampede, in which one man and two women were killed. (It happened on July 28th.)

Being called on a second mission to the Sandwich Islands, John R. left home on March 20, 1864, traveling by stage to Sacramento,

California. Elder Ben Cluff was to be his companion. This time, his relatives and friends were able to donate ticket money, so they took the stage to Sacramento. It was six days of bumps and jolts. In San Francisco, he met Orson Pratt, who was to go open Austria for missionary work. Orson wanted John to change his mission and go to Austria. But headquarters said no. In two days John was on a steamer with second-class tickets. (Pretty good) But the missionary pair's cabin mate was a rough Missourian who had TB. The ship's captain had the elders at lunch at his table one day; he had secretly arranged for them to debate religion with his minister friends. The rough Missourian was there, and became enraged. The captain quited him down. But that night, in the dark cabin, the man asked John to get out of bed and get him a drink. John didn't. The man came at him with a butcher knife. John was a sitting duck; he prayed. Suddenly the man fell backwards, and died.

In Hawaii, a Walter M. Gibson who was a member, had set himself up as prophet and king for the people there. He assumed church property as his own; and he would ordain you to an office if you paid him. Missionaries Joseph F. Smith and William Cluff had defied Mr. Gibson, and he was losing power. When John arrived in Honolulu, he was assigned to visit Mr. Gibson and get five hundred copies of the Book of Mormon back from him. Elder Young stayed a week with Gibson and got the books; also he got Gibson's temple clothes and a family pocket watch. Elder Young went on speaking tours of the mission with Elder Smith. They greeted members who had followed Gibson's teachings. They organized the old branches anew. Elder Young and Elder Ben Cluff also organized branches. Then releases came for Elder Smith and Elder William Cluff. They planned to have Elder Young take over as mission president. But he showed them his letters from home. He had two wives at home; they and relatives there were sacrificing a lot for Elder Young to be away. So Elder Young sailed for home with Elders Smith and Cluff. They got into San Francisco on November 6, 1864. There, Elder Young found work cutting wormal's dresses and selling the patterns, and sample dresses. (He also gave the customers tracts.) Elder Cluff and Elder Young got to talking with the local harlots; they set up a meeting and preached to them.

At Thanksgiving time, Elder Young took a boat south; his route home was through San Bernardino. But on the boat, he took sick from an digestive tract infection. Soon he could not talk, but still was aware of his surroundings. The captain made plans to bury Elder Young at sea. He prayed fervently after the captain left. Then an elderly person dressed in home-made clothes came in. He knelt at Elder Young's side and blessed him. In the morning Elder Young was well. His group arranged wagons to cross the desert. He drove one of the wagons. It was January 1866 when he surprised his wives -- "I'm home!"

Immediately after his return home he was in Willis D. Copeland's company of scouts and elected first lieutenant. As a member of J.D.L. Pierce's company he had charge of moving the loose stock from Berryville, Winsor and upper Kanab. This was his part in the Black Hawk War. After that, he worked with the Indian missionaries, Jacob Hamblin, Ira Hatch and Thales Haskell. He overworked himself and fell ill, but was saved by a humble elder's blessing.

In the fall of 1867 he was ordained a High Priest (at age 30) and set apart to act as a High Councilor in the St. George Stake. His work was at the cotton factory there. In 1869 he was given an errand to freight cotton goods to Beaver, and bring back wheat. While loading the wheat, William M. Black's wife, Amy, asked him to take her daughter, Tamar, back with him; she had an offer of marriage from a wealthy man, but he was not religious. Amy wanted to get Tamar away from the situation. Her father was working in St. George; she could stay with him. The trip back was snowy and muddy; it took eight days. Tamar was very patient. She grew to like John; John grew to like her. Tamar's father liked the idea of John and Tamar getting married. So in a month, there was a load of wheat to be taken to Salt Lake City. John got an extra wagon for Albina and her children, and with them, he and Tamar went with the wheat to Salt Lake City and there they were married.

For two years he labored in President Brigham Young's factory in Washington. In 1870 he helped to build a saw mill in Long Valley. John R.'s brother, Joseph W., was superintendent of the building of the St. George temple, but he also helped build a road near Lee's Ferry. Overwork got to him, and he died in June of 1873. In 1874 John R. assisted James A. Leithhead and William M. Black to erect a grist mill in Kanab. During 1873-1874, many destitute members came to Orderville to subsist. Those newcomers needed clothes. The "Order" had no reserve for that; it needed sheep, which would provide wool for clothes-making. So John R. and William M. Black were detailed to solve the problem. The two arranged with the Cedar City Co-op to rent 6,000 head of sheep. So, according to William M. Black, the "Order" owned a grist mill, a saw mill, a tannery, a threshing machine, three flocks of sheep, a dairy, and the farms of the members. The farms produced 1000 bushels of wheat a year. The years 1875-1877 were great for the "Order".

In March of 1877 John R. was called on a mission to Britain. He left on the 8th of May; it snowed that day. This mission, like others, involved walking miles each day. His area was in Wales. For Christmas 1877 he challenged a lady to baptism, and she accepted and was baptized that night -- in water with ice in it. Next he worked in Bristol. In little over a year, he baptized fourteen souls. His father called a "reunion" of all the family to gather in St. George in the winter months of 1878, so John was released to attend that.

On his way home, while in Salt Lake, John married Catherine Coles. That was on October 10th of 1878. She was 21; he was 42. Thirteen months later, in Salt Lake, she bore a girl, which they named Mary Ellen. Catherine got sick after the birth, and died within a month.

In the early summer of 1879, John R.'s younger brother, Franklin, came to visit. He had his wife, and four children. Franklin asked to stay with John R. and his family in their home in Orderville. And so it was done. Beds covered the kitchen floor at night. It was crowded.

As the years went by, pressure mounted; rumors came and went about the U.S. Marshals being near, or having gone by. In 1888 John moved his families to Loa. It was an out-of-the-way town, where possibly the marshals would not come. John was perturbed that he had married his wives in the 1860s when there was no law against polygamy in the country; yet twenty years later, the law "wanted" him for those crimes. John went to Salt Lake City and consulted with his father, Lorenzo, on what would be best for him to do. Lorenzo advised moving his families to Mexico. Albina dreaded moving; Lydia was okay with that, as was Tamar. John arranged for the farm and house in Loa to be Albina's.

Tamar had a boy, Daniel Washburn on Christmas Day in 1889 in Huntington (Utah). He died within three weeks. According to his father's advice, John started the process of taking his families to Mexico. First, John R. took Tamar and her children to Mancos, Colorado. Mancos is where May met and married Howard, in October of 1890. On Christmas Day of 1890, Tamar had another boy, Benjamin David. He died in three weeks -- a repeat of the previous year's trial! The eldest daughter, Hattie, had married Eugene Buchanan. They had gone along on the exodus to Mancos. There, Hattie had given birth to a baby boy, John Ray, on the last day of March. But Hattie did not feel well; she succumbed to an infection and died 12 days later -- on her eighteenth birthday!

(All of Tamar's children went to Mancos, except for Sammie; John R. had sheep that he left in southern Utah, and Sammie was delegated to herd them for a few months.) [John R. returned to Sammie and the sheep in June (1890), but had to go with a Mr. Snow to guide him to Mr. Snow's friend's herd. It was then that Sammie had his Boulder Mountain experience.]

Tamar's father, William M. Black, had taken his families to Colonia Diaz, arriving there in early June of 1889. In January of 1891, John R., after enduring one more year of marshal-dodging, followed, and took Lydia and Tamar and their families to Mexico (little Benjamin had died earlier that month). He got a place for Lydia in Colonia Dublan, and found one in Colonia Pacheco for Tamar. The time of his

move was triggered in part when his cousin asked him to come help fulfill a contract he had taken, to build a railroad line near the Colonies. John R. and his sons worked on the railroad for most of 1891. (It was there that Sammie had his dream of Hattie, and his vision of Moroni.) They also worked on building a new wagon road for the Colonies as part of the duties of living there.

In March of 1892, the family took time to make a visit home. Howard, May, and their baby, Mamie, came along. They crossed the border and passed through the little village of Columbus, New Mexico. As they continued on, a rifle the family had loaded to hunt rabbits was hanging in a scabbard on the swaying bows of the wagon. It swung hard with the bumps. One swing brought its end hard against a board, and the gun fired. The ball passed through the big book John R. was reading, then shattered his left arm, passed through the fleshy part of seven-year-old Ray's upper leg, and passed through little 7-month-old Mamie's head. The ball lodged in mother May's breast. The rest of the trip to Deming, the only place to get a doctor, was heart-breaking. Mamie, the baby, died within the hour. It was way past dark when they got to Deming. John R.'s arm had got infected, and he had to have his arm taken off in Deming. [opinion: the bleeding from a shattered arm could only be stopped by use of a tourniquet; it was left in place too long.] The family continued on to St. John's Arizona, where Howard & May stopped. John R. and the others continued on into Utah. The recovery was traumatic; John R. nearly died. But in August, he arranged for Tamar to live in Fruitland. He arranged to buy some land there, and in March of 1893 he traveled to Salt Lake to see about getting an \$1,100 inheritance from his father, Lorenzo Dow. On the way back, he used \$300 to buy a place in Huntington, Utah, for Albina to live. She had been trying to support herself and rent. He paid \$600 as part of the price for the land in Fruitland. He also arranged for more land in both Huntington and Fruitland, and ended up \$2,200 in debt. That didn't count his debts in Deming for supplies and doctor bill. John R. started a store in Fruitland, which did well, and was a help financially, so that by 1900, his debts were paid. (It was in 1899 in Fruitland, that his son, Sammie, experienced the healing of Sister Evans.)

In 1901 into 1902, there was a smallpox epidemic in Fruitland.
[SCYoung pg 36]

In 1904 (still in Fruitland) John R. wrote a report on the Nauvoo Exodus for a local newspaper. He went to St. George and was sealed to his parents on April 7th of 1904. In 1905 (April 30th) he was set apart to preside over the High Priests of the San Juan Stake of Zion. He was always energetic and faithful in the Church. Lydia died in Colonia Dublan in May of 1905. In early 1908 Tamar's family was living in Bluewater.

By 1910 John & Tamar had moved to Blanding. Albina was also there. She died in January of 1913. Tamar's father lived there also. He was infirm, and in February of 1915, he dictated to John a sketch of his life. He lingered until June, dying on the 21st. Tamar had become ill that winter. Her sickness took her on July 31st, 1915, a month after her father's death.

In 1916 John R. moved to Provo to live with his widowed daughter, May. He began the process of writing his book, *Memoirs of John R. Young, Utah Pioneer, 1847*. His book cost \$3,000 [a very large sum in those days] to publish. He attempted to get his sons to help finance it, but they could not help. He went into debt for his book. He died in 1931 in Provo.