

LAYTON, CHRISTOPHER

01

LAYTON, CHRISTOPHER, born at Thorncut, Bedfordshire, England, May 8, 1821; son of Samuel and Isabella (Wheeler) Layton; married (1) Mary Mathews at Thorncut, England, July 10, 1842; children, William, Elizabeth (Mrs. William Galbraith); (2) Sarah Martin at Thorncut, England, May 3, 1850, children, William, Christopher, Erastus, Charles M., Emma Jane, Eliza Ann (Mrs. Joseph G. Allred); (3) Sarah Barnes at Salt Lake City, September 26, 1852, children, Hyrum J., Ezra W., David E., Mary Ann (Mrs. George Swan), Annie B. (Mrs. Seth Chauncey Jones), Sarah E. (Mrs. Levi Taylor).

Married (4) Isabella Taylor at Salt Lake City, December, 1854, children, John H., Jacob A., Richard G., Samuel, Jane, Rachel (Mrs. James Warren), Lucy I. (Mrs. Francis Bone); (5) Caroline Cooper at Salt Lake City, April 12, 1856, children, James A., Heber C., Joseph, Frank G., Frederick, Chauncey W., Horace, Benjamin, Selina (Mrs. Edward G. Phillips), Martha ice (Mrs. James T. Walker) and Caroline (Mrs. Joseph W. Hill); (6) Rosa Ann Hudson at Salt Lake City, August 2, 1862, children, George W., Albert T., Heber C., Ernest, Isaac C., Mary I. (Mrs. Reuben Barnes), Jeanetta (Mrs. Ernest Zesigar), Rezina (Mrs. John H. Thornley), Olive (Mrs. Walter Barlow).

Married (7) Septima Simms at Salt Lake City, January 7, 1865, children, Oscar G., Harry W., Franklin S., Jesse M., Amy C. (Mrs. Reuben W. Fuller), Priscilla M. (Mrs. Thomas Flitton), Drucilla G. (Mrs. John H. Blood); (8) Mary Jane Roberts at Salt Lake City, May 1, 1870, children, Levi B., Florence (Mrs. Albert K. Green), Ella (Mrs. Edwin Webb), Harriet A. (Mrs. E. Conrad Miller), Phebe (Mrs. Willard R. Harris), Jennie M. (Mrs. Alonzo J. Gilbert).

Married (9) Elizabeth Williams at Salt Lake City, August 15, 1878, children, Lawrence W., Leslie W., Gilbert W., Lottie W. (Mrs. Joseph H. Larson), Lillian W. (Mrs. Edward M. Claridge), Luella W. (Mrs. Ousley A. Reneer and later Mrs. Bruce Major), Priscilla W. (Mrs. Benjamin N. McIntyre), Minnie W. (Mrs. George L. Hatch),

Elizabeth W. (Mrs. Joseph M. Savage and later Mrs. Floyd Griner), and Wilmyrth (Mrs. Elmer I. Robinette); he was the father of 63 children, of whom 51 were living at the time of his death.

Was the youngest of five children reared in very humble circumstances; had no schooling and went to work when about eight yearsold at a shilling and six pence (36 cents) per week; joined the Mormon Church on January 1, 1842, and a year later sailed for the United States; arrived at Nauvoo, Illinois, April 12, 1843, where he first met the Prophet Joseph Smith; endured the persecutions in that area and was moving west with other members of the Church when he was among the first of 506 Latter Day Saints to volunteer for service in the Mexican War.

Mustered in, age 25, to serve one year as Private, Captain James Brown's Company C., Mormon Battalion, at Council Bluffs, July 16, 1846; marched to Fort Leavenworth arriving August 1 and left there August 12 for Santa Fe arriving October 9; the Battalion departed from Santa Fe on October 19, marched down the Rio Grande and thence south and west to cross the continental divide; of his arrival in what is now Arizona he stated:

On the 2nd of December (1846) we reached the ruins of the old Rancho San Bernardino where we rested a day and a half and hunted wild cattle, thus adding five days rations to our scanty supplies.

The march through Tucson is thus described:

After traveling some 8 or 9 miles we struck a trail leading to Tucson. Our Colonel learned here from some Mexican soldiers that great excitement prevailed at Tucson because it was rumored that a large force of American soldiers was approaching. A message was therefore sent to Colonel Comaduran that the people need not be alarmed, as we were their friends, and would do them no harm, but simply purchase some supplies and pass on.

When near the Post about a dozen well-armed men in citizen's dress met and accompanied us to the gate of the town. When we marched through the deserted streets of Tucson some aged men and some women and children brought us water thus showing respect and kindness. We did not halt in the town but traveled down the stream about a half a mile and camped.

LAYTON, CHRISTOPHER

03

Marched via the Pima Villages and thence westward to the mouth of the Gila arriving January 8, 1847; after crossing the Colorado River the march was resumed via Warner's Ranch to San Diego arriving January 29; later the Company went to Los Angeles where he was honorably discharged on July 16, 1847.

Remained in California for over two and a half years where he accumulated a considerable sum of money, principally by dealing in horses, and then returned to England via Cape Horn, arriving in Liverpool in March, 1850; again sailed for the United States and after a seven weeks voyage reached New Orleans on November 22nd and thence up the Mississippi to St. Louis arriving on December 4, 1850; engaged in farming in Missouri until the spring of 1852 when he left for Utah and arrived in Salt Lake City on September 3rd in charge of a train of 52 wagons.

Engaged in farming near there and was naturalized as an American citizen on December 12, 1853; resided in Carson Valley, Nevada, during 1856-57 and then settled at Kaysville, Davis County, where he became one of the most successful farmers in Utah; member from Davis County, Convention at Salt Lake City, January 20-22, 1862, which adopted a Constitution for the proposed State of Deseret; chosen Bishop of Kaysville in April, 1862, and served as such for 15 years.

Appointed Quartermaster, 1st Brigade, Nauvoo Legion, Utah militia, May 19, 1866; member, from Davis and Morgan Counties, H. of R., 16th Utah Territorial Legislature, at Salt Lake City, December 10, 1866, to January 18, 1867, and 17th Annual Session, January 13 to February 21, 1868; released as Bishop of Kaysville to become First Councillor to the President of Davis Stake when organized in June 17, 1877.

After the United States Supreme Court on January 6, 1879 unanimously decided that the anti-polygamy Act of July 1, 1862 was constitutional he and many others were indicted for violation of that law, and he stated that:

It became necessary for my personal safety that I should be in hiding from those who were so strenuously making arrests under the Edmands Act. Finally my wives and children agreed that they would rather know that I was at liberty than to have me dodging the hounds of the law, and under these conditions, I accepted a call to preside over and make a home for Saints in Southern Arizona.

In February, 1883, he was set apart in Sale Lake City as President of St. Joseph Stake in Arizona; arrived at St. David, Cochise County, A.T., February 24, and on the following day at a meeting of the Saints residing there, was sustained as President of the Stake; developed a farm on the San Pedro river but in July, 1884, moved with members of his family to Safford on the Gila River where he had purchased a grist mill for \$10,000; joined the Society of Arizona Pioneers at Tucson, September 6, 1886.

In July, 1886, he bought 320 acres of land and laid out the town of Thatcher; in 1890 he contracted to carry the United States mail from Bowie via Fort Thomas to Globe and also entered into a contract to supply 10,000 pounds of flour each week to the San Carlos Indian Agency; in addition to the flour mill his business operations in Graham County included stores, an ice factory and several stage lines, all of which were successful; said to have been the first to plant alfalfa in that County; that he successfully avoided arrest for polygamy is shown by what was written about him by John Q. Cannon:

I met him in Arizona during the "Crusade" days in 1885. Like many another he was being hunted and hounded until he scarcely knew which way to turn for safety. Patience had ceased to be a virtue with him and he chafed under the restraints and seclusion his brethren advised. . . We met again under somewhat uneasy circumstances - this time on a train between Salt Lake and Ogden - and it was my good fortune to assist him in baffling those who thought they at last surely had him in their grasp.

LAYTON, CHRISTOPHER

If other men who made plural marriages could have shown the same ability to support their families in comfort that practice would have ample justification; none where he lived were better housed or better fed nor kept more industriously at work; he not only cared for their temporal good but saw that his children obtained an education and attended to their spiritual needs so that they became worthy of the good name that he left to them.

On January 21, 1898, he was released as President of St. Joseph Stake because of ill health; ordained a Patriarch by Apostle John Henry Smith at Thatcher, January 29, 1898; went to Utah in June for a surgical operation which appeared beneficial but he passed away at Kaysville, August 13, 1898, aged 77; buried in the Kaysville cemetery. John Q. Cannon said of him:

Christopher Layton was one of the great men of this wonderful community of Mormons. Handicapped more than any of his associates by the lack of school-education, he nevertheless proved himself no whit their inferior in judgment, wisdom, foresight, energy and the great practical qualities that make for success. He was in every respect a worthy and respected colleague of the biggest and the brainiest.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Tyler, D. - History of the Mormon Battalion, 1881, p. 122.
Layton, Christopher - Autobiography, Salt Lake City, 1911 (portrait).
Barnes, W. C. - Arizona Place Names, Tucson, 1935, p. 242.
McClintock, J. H. - Mormon Settlement in Arizona, Phoenix, 1921, pp 24-25, 36-37, 196 (portrait), 260, 262, 263.
McClintock, J. H. - Arizona, The Youngest State, Chicago, 1916, p.456.
Roberts, B. H. - The Mormon Battalion, Salt Lake City, 1919, pp. 85-86.
Whitney, O. F. - History of Utah, Vol. 2, pp 39, 260, 268.
Jenson, A. - Latter Day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, Salt Lake City, 1901, pp 363-364.
Esshorn, F. - Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah, 1913, p 327 (portrait).
The Adjutant General of the Army - Military service records.
U. S. Veterans Administration - Pension records, Mex., W.C. 12,642.
16th and 17th Utah Territorial Legislature - Journals, 1866-67, 1868.