

BYRAM LEE BYBEE

Byram Bybee was born 25 February 1799 in Barren County, Kentucky. He was the son of John Bybee and Betsy Kelley (or Killey) Bybee.

His father, John Bybee, purchased about 447 acres on Glovers Creek in 1806 and established a plantation. He raised nine children there: John, Neal McCann, Buford, Byram, William, Betsy, Delilah, Polly and Nancy.

Byram was probably named after his grandmother Kelly, whose maiden name was Mary Byram. He grew up on his father's plantation. He was about 20 years old when his father died in 1819, leaving various pieces of property to his wife and children. He left Byram a tract of land located on Nobb Creek.

Byram married Elizabeth (Betsy) Lane/Layne in 1819. Eight children were born to them while they lived in Barren County. They were: Polly Chapman, Rhoda Bird, Elizabeth Jane, Luann, John McCann, Luceen Bird, David Bowman, and Jonathan Marion.

Byram gave up his slaves, sold all his belongings and migrated to Clay County, Indiana. Two more children were born to them in Indiana; Robert Lee and Byram Levi.

While living in Indiana they were converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints and baptized in 1839.

In 1842 they moved to Nauvoo, Illinois where they took part in the early day activities of the Church and became well acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith and others.

Byram Bybee was a shoemaker by trade, and had a very kind and gentle disposition. Betsy Lane was a refined lady, was small of stature and possessed a sunny disposition, and they were very devoted people who observed the Sabbath day strictly. They were taught to be honest in all of their dealings with their fellow men and to walk in humility.

On 20 January 1848, Byram was residing at Kanesville (later Council Bluffs) Iowa, and signed a petition to the U.S. Government asking for a postal service in the Pottawattamie lands.

Byram Bybee crossed the plains in 1848 as a teamster in President Heber C. Kimball's Company, and received a commendation for his faithful service (Journal History 7 April 1849, page 5).

In 1851 Byram and his wife, Betsy Lane, and two others (probably their two sons, Byram Levi and Robert Lee) crossed the plains and mountains from Winter Quarters, Nebraska, to Salt Lake City, Utah, in Captain Alfred Cardon's Fifty of Captain James W. Cummings' Ox Train, and arrived at their destination 6 October 1851.

Byram Bybee was one of the first settlers of South Weber, settling in there in the fall of 1851. He also helped construct the South Weber Canal in the early part of the spring of 1852, so he became one of

the original owners of the canal. (East of Antelope Island by Davis County D.U.P. Pages 172-173.)

In the fall of 1852 he was called as second counselor to Abiah Wadsworth, the presiding Elder and later Bishop. He held this position until 1858 when a new Bishopric was installed.

Betsy Lane Bybee was sealed as a wife to Byram Bybee on 13 March 1852 in the Council House, Salt Lake City, Utah. He served as Justice of the Peace from 1854 to 1861.

On 15 August 1856, Byram was married to Elsie Marie Knudsen in Brigham Young's office (record in basement of Temple Annex). Two children were born to this union; a son who died in infancy and is thought to be named John, and a daughter, Betsy Marie Bybee.

In the early 60's the Weber River became very high and many farms were inundated and practically destroyed. Many of the settlers left the location and went south to Dixie or Washington County, including several Bybee families. Church History states, "Byram Bybee, David Bybee and other Bybee families moved to Dixie in 1863."

The first town of Grafton was settled in 1849 a mile below the present site of Grafton, on the Virgin River. In 1862, the town was washed away by a flood, after forty straight days of rain. A new site was chosen at a better location a mile upstream from the old site, on the south bank. (The Historical Guide to Utah Ghost Towns, by Stephen L. Carr, page 133.)

It was at this new townsite that the Bybee families settled and began planting their crops and establishing homes. By 1864, about twenty-eight families were settled there, each farming about an acre of land. The Bybee families found it difficult to make a living, so many of them left and went back to Uintah, Utah.

Byram Bybee remained in Grafton, and died there in 1864 and was buried in the small cemetery. A headstone has recently been placed on his grave. Contributions were made by some of his descendants.

Betsy Lane Bybee was taken to Smithfield, Utah, by her son Robert Lee Bybee, where she died in 1867. Elsie Marie Knudsen Bybee died in about 1866.

Compiled by Judy V. Atwood

REFERENCES:

1. Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah, page 788.
2. Bybee Families, found in S.L.C. Genealogical Library.
3. East of Antelope Island, Davis Co. D.U.P., Pages 172-173.
4. The Historical Guide to Utah Ghost Towns, Stephen Carr, page 133.