

A History of the Rise of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah

Sources:

“Life of Archibald Gardner” by Delila Gardner Hughes, Alpine Publishing, 2nd Edition, 1970.

“Robert Gardner Jr. - Self History/ Journal as updated by Reed M. Gardner

Anyone with historical information about the rise of the Church is invited to share that information by sending it to this website and it will be added.

Thanks. Hal Pierce

Archibald Gardner

Archibald Gardner was simply one of the greatest of men to ever live on earth and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owes a great deal to him and his relatives for its survival and its current size. He filled a role that had to be filled by a strong and talented man when the Saints arrived in the Salt Lake valley and his influence extended to other places where they settled. Hundreds of his descendants and relatives have served missions for the Church. His brothers William and Robert and other siblings and relatives were equally talented.

Much could be said about Archibald's years in Canada but only his escape from Canada from a Sheriff and mob will be included here: The Sheriff and mob tried to prevent his leaving Canada supposedly because he had a contract with a man named Garish that he hadn't completed. The truth was he was being persecuted because he was a Mormon. He had completed much of the contract and not been paid anything. He had asked the man to let him out of the contract so he could leave, which Garish would not do.

Hearing that the Sheriff and mob were after him he left by night and walked 30 miles to the St. Clair River above Detroit Michigan. The river was over 1 mile wide and the ice had begun to break up and flow on the river as it was now March when he left. He started on the ice while going toward where it was flowing and was able to jump to a large block of ice. Some on the American side had tried to reach him with poles but he was able to reach ice he could walk on near the American side. For a time many people on both sides were screaming for him to go back for no one had been known to survive doing what he did. This harrowing experience can best be appreciated by reading his own account which is in his biography and reading his brother, Robert's biography.

When he reached Nauvoo he found the town deserted and continued on via St. Louis looking for his family.

Even the Salt Lake temple owes much of its existence to this great man. In Utah and the surrounding area he was responsible for starting many saw mills, shingle mills, flour mills, woolen mills, and carding factories. He and his brother Robert started the first commercial saw mill operation in Utah. He was responsible for the digging of canals to run the water powered mills and the steam driven mills. He also built several bridges over rivers and established roads. He dug canals for the flooding of land to allow agricultural crops. For a time he had a contract to create railroad ties as the railroad came into the area and he supplied the lumber for a six mile snow

shed over the tramway of the railroad. During his lifetime he employed over 1000 people. Many women, usually from his family, kept the working men fed and clothed.

Initially his brother Robert worked with him but Robert was called by Brigham Young to go to southern Utah to help establish a cotton growing industry and thus he helped establish St. George and Pine Valley Utah in those very hot, very cold and difficult climates.

Because Archibald was a polygamist he at times had to try to avoid the federal agents who tried to hunt him down and imprison him. For a short time once he even went to Mexico and St. George to avoid the lawmen and eventually helped settle the Afton Wyoming area in the Star Valley near the Idaho border to avoid the federal lawmen. This resulted in his talents, services and some of his large family also going to Star Valley.

During the Johnston army fiasco brought on by a gullible and biased President James Buchanan most Saints were required to move south from the Salt Lake area and many went to what is now Spanish Fork Utah where homes and mills were built which required Archibald's services and family members. This area had an abundance of Indians and some could be difficult to deal with at times, especially if they got their hands on liquor. A beautiful young Indian woman lost her nose to a drunk Indian man and she was taken into the Gardner family and loved as one of their own. Another Indian girl that had been stolen by one tribe of Indians from another tribe was taken into the family at age 10 years. She would quickly disappear if Indians came near her.

The Johnston army invasion resulted in a great blessing for the Saints because of its affect on the building of the temple. Archibald Gardner's biography states that after the army left and the foundation stones of the temple were uncovered, cracks in the stones were discovered which required a different approach to the construction. Without the invasion and the cessation of construction at that time a very large disaster might have occurred.

According to the Archibald biography, Brigham Young had set down at the construction site and stated he would not leave until the Lord gave him a revelation of how to handle the problem of foundation cracking. Archibald Gardner appeared and told President Young that the problem was a result of mortar being used between stones that did not properly fit together. The solution would be to tear out all the original foundation and replace it with stones that were cut to match perfectly without the necessity of the weaker mortar.

Brigham Young stated that Brother Gardner's advice was his

revelation and he instructed builders to proceed in that way. Enormous effort was required to replace the foundation but that was done and the building stands today as a testimony of that solution.

Johnston's army was so called, because it was led by U.S. General Albert Johnston. Johnston later went to California and was encouraged by some to help lead and create a Pacific Nation. However, when the Civil War started he was anxious to get into the fight on the confederate side partly because of his disdain of General Ulysses S. Grant. He was killed at the battle of Shiloh on 6 April 1862.

Johnston's campaign in Utah was to put down the supposed rebellion against the United States government by the Mormons. He died on the 32nd anniversary of the founding of the Church while he himself was in rebellion against the United States government.

Archibald was well known for his kindness and generosity. Many people over the years found a sack of flour or other foods at their door that he had left there.

One man who went to his mill and tried to buy flour was turned away because he had money and could buy his flour at the store. Archibald simply said he was saving his flour for those who couldn't pay. The next day the man observed Archibald having to buy hardware on credit because he didn't have money to pay for it.

Archibald served as the West Jordan Ward Bishop for 32 years and was very proud that all his descendants at the time near his death had remained faithful to the gospel. He also served two terms in the Territorial Legislature.

Brigham Young was an extremely busy man and as such had little time for diplomacy. He once chastised Archibald in public and then said, I suppose now you will apostacize from the Church. Archibald explained that this is the Kingdom of God and he had as much right to it as Brigham did.

For a greater appreciation of the sacrifices this man made to build up the Church one must ponder his life's biography written by his daughter, Delila Gardner Hughes.

Robert Gardner, Jr.

Robert like his brother Archibald was born in Scotland and was taken to Canada by his parents at an early age. Robert came with his mother some months after his father and other siblings had gone earlier. He said he only had 3 weeks of formal schooling and was concerned he might show his

ignorance at times. He said he wanted only to work hard and live in peace with his neighbors. He married Jane McKeown from Ireland in Canada.

When Robert learned of the Gospel restoration in Canada he was very excited to take a trip to Nauvoo in June 1845 to see Church headquarters and get more familiar with the Church and its people. He had little money to make the trip but a great amount of faith. He left home with a large sack of crackers and sometimes used them for money and spent only \$5 for the entire trip while working out his transportation part of the time. Sadly Joseph Smith had lost his life one year earlier but he did have a short conversation with Brigham Young.

His report to his small Branch when he got back was that he had become familiar with Archibald Hill who was running a hoisting winch at the temple construction site and he invited him to sleep with his children and have something to eat at his house. He accepted the bed but didn't have the heart to take food because everyone was so poor. The temple workers were working without pay and many were assigned to guard the temple at night. He said he was able to buy a 3 cent loaf of bread each day and got along "first rate."

Robert stayed in Nauvoo for 2 weeks, received his patriarchal blessing from William Smith and when he left he looked back and wept for "his heart was now with the Saints."

During the winter of 1846 John A. Smith came from Nauvoo to Canada and asked the Canadian members to quickly join with the Saints in their trek to the Rocky Mountains. Selling property and leaving was a difficult activity because of the persecution of Mormons. All of the Gardner family and some of the families they had married into accepted the gospel. William Gardner (Robert's brother) was required to leave a young son behind with former in-laws because his wife had become incapacitated and died. The boy grew up in Canada and never became a member of the Church.

Robert was among the first group of Brigham Young's pioneers to travel to the Salt Lake Valley, a distance of approximately 1030 miles. This group included 143 men, 3 women and 2 boys. The group intended to arrive soon enough to plant crops and establish some roadways for the larger groups to come later. They were able to hunt for some of their food along the way.

A very sad accident occurred on the trip when Robert's 5 ½ year old son, also named Robert, was kicked under the wagon wheel by an ox that then pulled forward running over the boy. That afternoon the boy ran beside the wagon but later collapsed as he was injured internally. For the next 500

miles his father held him and drove the oxen while the father was shaking with symptoms of malaria. The boy after much suffering became skin and bones before he died and was buried on the banks of the Platte River. A year later Robert's Brother William and William's son John checked on the gravesite and found that wolves had scattered the bones of the boy so they gathered them and reburied them more securely.

One terrible experience Robert had was early on a cold morning he attempted to climb a mountain where logs were being harvested and a raceway down the mountain had been created to slide the logs down the mountain. Believing he was the only one on the mountain at that early hour he attempted to avoid the walk in the snow by walking up the raceway.

A log coming down the mountain overtook him and took a large piece of flesh out of his right calf all the way to the bone. The men who found him with severe bleeding had no way to get him down the mountain and to a home other than to drag him, and then eventually getting him to a sleigh with just rough logs on it. The bottoms of his trousers were completely gone when they arrived at a house and a large amount of snow pushed up into his shirt in the back. The men eventually got him to his home and Porter Rockwell (the famous gun fighter) attempted to sew the flesh and skin back on his leg but had to quit because he didn't have the heart to do it. Then with Porter threading the needle Robert was able to get into a position to sew the flesh himself.

Robert said his immediate concern was that he would not be able to go on a mission he had been called to in his old home area of Canada during the coming spring (April 1857). He eventually served that mission with other men pulling handcarts. He also was able to retrieve money his brother Archibald had left there in his quick exit. Charles Shumway became Robert's missionary companion in Canada.

He served as President of the Mill Creek Ward at the time of the accident and because of 3 women being so kind to him while he was hurt he jokingly told all 3 that he blessed them to have twins, which all had soon afterwards and were the only sets of twins in the valley that year. He promised to be more careful with his blessings in the future.

After returning from his mission he and his 3 wives and all children were living with him in one house with each wife having their own rooms and taking turns with the household chores. His gristmills were doing well and he considered that period the happiest time of his life.

His life was soon disrupted with a call to go help establish another settlement in the south and set up a cotton growing area. He said when he heard of the calling he spit, took off his hat and scratched his head and said,

all right. He left in November 1861.

This calling would eventually put him and family member's lives in danger for lack of adequate food and shelter with conditions of heat and cold that at times would even cause the animals to cease working.

Apostle Erastus Snow was the leader of the southern or "Dixie" settlement efforts and he asked Robert to take control of a saw mill in Pine Valley as there was great need for lumber in the new settlements. This area also supplied the wood for the construction of the Salt Lake City Tabernacle organ as the wood there was determined to be the best for that purpose by the organ builder, Joseph Ridges.

The mill was doing little work except in the spring when sufficient water was flowing. Robert was greatly impressed with the springs, trees, fertile soil and cool climate of Pine Valley.

He was ordained Bishop of St. George which took in 5 settlements and included Pine Valley. He served in that position until 7 November 1869. When he was released he was called as the first counselor to the new Bishop. He at one point drove a large cedar stake into the ground designating the southeast corner of St. George during a survey.

During the fall of 1863 he went back to Mill Creek in Salt Lake City and sold his farm and half interest in a gristmill he had with his brother Archibald, to Brigham Young. He sold the property for \$8000 worth of stock, wagons, a stove and "anything Brigham had to spare."

He asked Brigham to give him \$500 in money to help him establish a home in the south and Brigham said he would not give him one red cent in money. Robert said he always found Brigham to be as good as his word so he then paid \$500 tithing, \$200 to the emigration fund and started back south in November.

Crops in the south mostly failed during 1864 and people in that area were dependent on friends and family in Salt Lake City for their sustenance. Robert's brother Archibald and some others sent them 1600 pounds of flour and had it delivered to Cedar City which they had to pick up. Many times the people in the south suffered from lack of food and poor housing that left them exposed to the weather and to poor health conditions. There were some deaths from these conditions.

During March 1872 Robert was elected Mayor of St. George and served for 4 years, being elected twice.

The St. George temple site was dedicated 9 November 1871 and took over 4 years to build by men from the large geographical area.

Beginning in 1872 Robert served for 5 years in the Stake Presidency.

Brigham Young asked people in the area to volunteer to join a United

Order and Robert became the President of the group. This was intended to unite the people in temporal as well as spiritual affairs.

During his life Robert was ordained as a High Priest, Seventy and Patriarch. He served as a temple worker in St. George from 1883 to 1887.

After long and dedicated service to the Lord and His people Robert Gardner died on 3 February 1906. His many descendants continue his example by building the Church in our day.