

Young, John Ray

Young, John Ray, president of the High Priests quorum in the San Juan Stake of Zion, was born April 30, 1837, at Kirtland, Ohio, the son of Lorenzo D. Young and Persis Goodell. While an infant the family moved to Missouri, where his father bought one hundred and sixty acres of government land and was driven from it under the exterminating order of Gov. Boggs. The family next settled in Nauvoo, Ill., whence they, together with the rest of the Saints, were driven into the wilderness in 1846. His father was one of the original pioneers of Utah in 1847, while the subject of this sketch and his brother, Franklin W., crossed the plains in Jedediah M. Grant's company, reaching Great Salt Lake Valley Oct. 2, 1847.

His father, with his family, were the first of the pioneers who left the fort to build on their city lots. He erected a two-roomed log house in 1847 on the lot where the Beehive and Lion Houses now stand. In the early days of Nauvoo John Ray suffered 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."

In 1854 John Ray was called on a mission to the Sandwich Islands, together with about twenty other young men, among whom was Joseph F. Smith, now the President of the Church. He crossed the southern desert to California and filled a successful mission to the islands, where he passed through a number of extraordinary experiences and witnessed the miraculous manifestations of the power of God on many different occasions. He returned to America in 1857 and arrived in Salt Lake City in the early part of 1858. That year he witnessed the passing through Great Salt Lake City of the Johnston army. In 1859 (Jan. 1st) he married Albina Terry and made a home in Payson, Utah county. In 1861 he was called on a mission to Dixie. At Santa Clara he bought an Indian farm, which was washed away by the floods the following spring. In 1862, again responding to a call from the Church authorities, he went to Omaha to gather the poor, crossing the mountains and plains in Capt. 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 Aug. 17, 1862, and reached G. S. L. City Oct. 29, 1862; it was the last train of the season. 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 July 7, 1863, and reached G.

S. L. City Sept. 12th of that year. During the journey across the plains (on July 28th) the company had a fearful stampede, in which one man and two women were killed. By request of Pres. Erastus Snow he moved with his family to St. George, southern Utah. Being called on a second mission to the Sandwich Islands, he left home March 20, 1864, traveling by stage to Sacramento, California. While on that mission Elder Young visited all the branches of the Church on the islands of Hawaii and Maui, reorganizing them and helping to put a stop to Walter M. Gibson's impositions. He returned home from that mission in the spring of 1865.

Immediately after his return home he was enrolled 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. In the fall of 1867 he was ordained a High Priest and set apart to act as a High Councilor in the St. George Stake. For two years he labored in Pres. Brigham Young's factory in Washington. In 1870 he helped to build a saw mill in Long Valley and in 1874 assisted James A. Leithhead and Wm. M. Black to erect a grist mill in Kanab. In 1877-79 he filled a mission to England, during which he baptized fourteen souls.

Being the husband of four wives he moved to Mexico a few years later, in order to avoid arrest. After Pres. Woodruff had issued the manifesto he returned to the United States and made his home at Fruitland, New Mexico. Here he acted as postmaster for eight years and as assessor of San Juan county two years. In 1905 (April 30th) he was set apart to preside over the High Priests of the San Juan Stake of Zion. Elder Young has always been an energetic and faithful Elder in the Church. He has raised a large family and as he ripens in years he can rejoice in the integrity and faithfulness of his many sons and daughters and grandchildren, who are endeavoring to serve the God of their father

(Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake Cit 274.]