

History of John Royal Young

(information for this history was contributed by Royal Clifton Young and Veola Young Grover, children of John Royal Young)

(A great deal of the history is also condensed from a personal autobiography, written by John Royal Young himself)

John Royal Young was born at Glendale, Kane County, Utah on February 27, 1872, the fifth of six sons born to John Royal Young and Albina Terry. Roy was named after his father. His brothers were Franklin Albion, born on January 6, 1861; Syle Smith, born on August 6, 1863; Ferra Little, born on February 26, 1866; Will Reynolds, born on November 28, 1868; and Joe Willard, born on May 14, 1875.

Roy was born of Mormon parents, in an area that was still undergoing the phases of pioneer life, and he was brought up as a farmer's son, enduring the usual hardships and deprivations of those early days. He was taught good Latter Day Saint principles which helped to mold his life in an exemplary way and he was able, later, to pass on those good principles to his own children.

Roy did not remain in Glendale for very many years. In 1876, his parents moved into Orderville, Utah, and the family lived in the United Order until February 26, 1883. After Brigham Young died, and John Taylor became President of the Church, Roy's father made a trip to Salt Lake City to talk to him about the future of the United Order. President Taylor's attitude discouraged him so that he went home and moved two of his families out into Rabbit Valley. One wife refused to leave, but later rejoined her husband. Sometime between the age of fourteen and seventeen, Roy left home to make his own way in life, mostly with the shepherds. He received some help from his brothers and he went home occasionally for a visit, but he never returned there to live. He had missed a great deal of schooling and, later on, he felt the need to become better educated; so, he left the area where he was living and moved to the little town of Huntington in Emery county where he stayed with his brother Syle and his wife Mamie, and attended school. He completed his schooling after he became a grown man, which was a rather admirable thing to do. Roy became very proficient in many things, being able to measure land efficiently, figure the tonnages of the hay crop, and master other figures so necessary to the farmer. he was also a great reader and he was especially fond of good religious books.

During part of 1895 and 1896, Roy herded sheep and then, in the fall of 1896, he leased a herd for himself, a chance which did not work out well for him during those depression years in the sheep business. It was while he was really down and out that he met Elisabeth Louisa Wilcock, a native of Parowan, then living in Huntington. Roy and Lizzie fell very much in love and Roy was impressed with the fact that she did not demand a nice home and all of life's conveniences before marriage. They were married in Huntington on September 15, 1896, and for the first year of their lives together jobs were almost non-existent and wages were terribly low. The young couple barely existed and had to rely on help from Lizzie's parent to get by. In September of 1897, Roy obtained a job with his brother and went two hundred miles away onto the west desert to herd sheep for the winter at \$30 per month. His little daughter Guila was born on January 9, 1898, while he was away and he was so happy when he returned in the spring to find his wife and baby well, living with Elisabeth's parents.

During the summer of 1898, Roy and Elisabeth worked at a sawmill in the mountains and were together for the entire summer. That winter, Roy worked on the East Desert, near the Colorado River. The family's struggle for existence lasted for seven years and during that time, three more children were born at Huntington. Royal Clifton was born on April 9, 1900; Maude on March 25, 1902; and Dee Christopher on March 15, 1904. Roy had been able to purchase a small piece of land, but it went swampy and all possibility of farming came to an end. During the previous winter, Roy had been talking to a man on the freight road about some wonderful farming country in Idaho. He decided to talk over the possibility with his wife and when he found her willing to make the change, they made immediate plans to move north. Lizzie's parents decided that they would also like to go along with their three children who were still living at home and Roy also aroused the interest in two young men, Frank Guyman and Bert McKee, who decided to make the trip with

them and look for jobs in Idaho. The baby was only two weeks old, but Roy rigged up a covered wagon with a spring mattress for his wife and baby and they started out on the long trip in June of 1904. It took four days to make the journey to Provo and from there, Roy chartered space on an emigrant car for his livestock and supplies. He and the two men accompanied the stock on the freight train and the rest of the group followed two days later on the passenger train. Everyone arrived on the same evening at St. Anthony, Idaho, during a rain storm. They set up a big tent with a stove in it and began to weather out the storm, which lasted for three days.

The men found jobs plowing sagebrush land around St. Anthony and Roy began to build up a little bank account. During their spare time, Roy and Elizabeth's father, Christopher Wilcock, looked around for the unclaimed land east of Ashton and were finally able to select some property and file a claim on a section that is now located in some of the best dry farm land in that part of Idaho. But when a September freeze killed all the wheat in that area, Roy and Christopher decided that they didn't want to live in that section and began to go out that fall, looking for land to the south. They found children skating on the ponds at Rexburg that November, but when they arrived at Shelley two days later they found no ice on the streams or ponds and decided that it would be a good place to settle. Christopher Wilcock and his family continued on home to Huntington and Elizabeth's brother Chris and his wife left Huntington at the same time to join Roy and Elizabeth in Idaho. After they arrived, Roy and Chris began to build a small house at Tilden to winter in before the cold weather set in. Chris's wife, Ida, became ill with uremic poisoning and died suddenly and the plans all had to be changed. They took Ida to Blackfoot to an undertaker, where she was prepared for shipment back to Huntington. Everyone except Roy returned with the body to Huntington and Roy was left to spend the winter alone in Idaho.

In April of 1905, Roy returned to Huntington, disposed of all the families' possessions there, and moved his wife and children back to Idaho for good. They rented a house at Goshen and Roy was able to gather up enough sheep to herd for the summer. On July 5, 1905, he was struck by lightning and nearly lost his life. Another sheepherder who was with him at the time was killed. The farmers around Goshen had a lot of surplus pasture and no market for their hay. They seemed willing to sell land for promise, which is about all Roy had to offer, so Roy picked up some grazing land and then began to build a herd of sheep to graze on it. By the 15th of November, he was all set with both sheep and land.

That winter Roy accepted a position as teacher in the Y.M.M.I.A. organization of the Mormon Church. It afforded him the chance to learn and study the principles of the Gospel and he worked hard at it. One of the things he appreciated most of all that winter was being able to be at home with his wife and family. On June 13, 1906, twins were born to Roy and Elizabeth at Goshen. Mildred died on the same day and Wilford C., the little boy, was not a healthy baby, being very weak and frail. Winter came on and there were problems with the sheep that year. It was too cold, the green feed would not grow, and the sheep would not eat the hay they were fed. There were problems with the wolves and coyotes and additional problems that arose at lambing time. The ewes were weak and the little lambs would perish in the cold almost as soon as they were born. A big storm seemed to be on its way and Roy was terribly discouraged, knowing that if he lost his sheep herd he would be ruined. He remembered his Patriarchal blessing in which he had been promised that he would have enough faith to control the elements, so he returned to his flock and prayed that the storm would be turned away. He saw the storm divide, one part passing to the south and the other to the north, as the sun came up over the hill to the east, shining down on the little valley where they sheep herd was located. No more lambs were lost and the herd was saved. Shortly after that time, after the strenuous work with the flock was over, Clifton arrived at the her with the news that little Wilford was very ill. Roy mounted his pony and rushed to the house where the baby was administered to and Roy prayed that Wilford's life would be spared until the lambing was over and he could give more attention to his family. After that, Wilford rallied and Roy returned to his work. Ten days later, while Roy was with the herd, he had a strong impulse to return to his home. He headed for the house as fast as he could and arrived just in time to take his baby in arms just before it passed away on May 5, 1907.

Three more children were born to Roy and Elizabeth at Goshen. Lloyd W. was born on February

24, 1908; Ferra B. on December 8, 1909; and Veola on September 17, 1913. Conditions began to improve for the family and Roy realized that he would probably never have to work for anyone else again. he was able to shear his sheep and sell the wool for enough to pay for his hay, pasture, and all the bills. The feed on the range improved, the her thrived, and Roy was able to pay off all his debts and have \$1100 in the clear. That enabled him to establish good credit and he maintained that standing all through his life.

As the years passed and the family grew up, Roy felt the need for better living conditions and school facilities for his children than were available in Goshen. So, in 1913 or 1914, he sold the sheep business and decided to move the family to Shelley. A new high school had just been completed there and Roy purchased a piece of land, eighty acres, and went to work building a home for the family. Roy had become very active in the church and had advanced in the Priesthood to the position of Seventy by 1907 and High Priest by 1912. he had also done a great deal of local missionary work. After moving to Shelley, he was set apart as a member of the High Council in the new Shelley Stake. He had not had experience in public speaking previous to that appointment, and Roy felt that he never did make a good speaker, but he did speak at meetings whenever he was called upon.

For the first eight years at Shelley, the family all worked hard at improving and leveling the gravelly rough land they had purchased. The children all worked with Roy and he appreciated their efforts immensely. They made a good farm out of their land and they all became good farmers and homemakers.

On January 2, 1924, Roy had to enter the L.D.S. Hospital in Idaho Falls for surgery. It was not successful and Roy was in poor health from then on. The family grew up, married, and left home -- including the tenth child, Wendell K., who was born after the family moved to Shelley on March 23, 1919. In spite of his poor health, Roy and Elizabeth remained on the farm until 1945.

John Royal Young was a good man. He taught his sons to be good farmers and all of his children to be good citizens. he was a fine example to his family and his children all loved and respected him. Physically, Roy was of average height and weight, being about five feet ten inches tall. he had blue eyes and dark brown hair. he was always a physically active man, a quick thinker, and fast in coming to a decision. He was an outdoor man, loved his farm and livestock, but also enjoyed his home and family, finding time to read and study in his spare time.

Roy was very good at driving horses and he had a good four-horse team and a big wagon with which he hauled lots of sugar beets for the neighbors when his own crops had been harvested. He was a neighborly gentleman and had many friends. His favorite team was a pair of gray horses which he kept until they died of old age in an underground shelter, in winter.

Roy's favorite hobby was tanning deer hides and making leather goods. He made many quilts, bridles, gun cases, and hackamores.

When Roy and Elizabeth were no longer able to handle the farm work, they decided to retire. They sold the farm to their son, Wendell, and moved to Idaho Falls on January 22, 1945. Both Roy and Elizabeth were in poor health and, after six years in Idaho Falls, Elizabeth developed an aneurysm and passed away on March 3, 1951. She was returning to Shelley for burial.

After Elizabeth's death, Roy worked in the Idaho Falls Temple until his health would no longer permit it. After that he spent a great deal of time with his children. He suffered a stroke and passed away at Rexburg, Madison County, Idaho, on October 6, 1959. He was buried in Shelley, next to his beloved Lizzie.