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JOSEPH BARNEY WINTLE
By
Maurice L. Howe

An interesting story that should have been recorded before his demise was lost to history when Joseph Barney Wintle died in Ogden, Utah, in 1916 at the age of 76. Mr. Wintle was one of the real, original pony express riders. He entered the employ of Russell Majors and Waddell when the Pony Express was organized and rode with the first message westward in April 1860. He continued as a rider until the Pony Express was disbanded when the first transcontinental telegraph line was completed in October 1861.

Mr. Wintle was born in Yarmouth, Norfolk, England, February 29, 1840. He was a son of Elizabeth Sewell and George Wintle, who was born April 17, 1812, on the island of Heligoland. Joseph B. Wintle came to America on the ship Tuscarora which sailed from Liverpool for Philadelphia in May 1853. In 1854 he went to St. Louis, Mo. In 1857 he came to Utah in Captain Jim Brown's company of Mormon converts. Later he returned east and served the Pony Express Company. His father George Wintle, joined the L. D. S. Church June 25, 1860 and in August, 1860, sailed from Liverpool to New York. George Wintle then came on to St. Louis and eight months later traveled in Job Pingree's ox team train of Latter Day Saints to Utah, arriving in Ogden September 2, 1861. George Wintle was a sailor from 1824 to 1860. He followed farming in Utah, and died at Bountiful, Davis County in 1897.

Joseph B. Wintle, the Pony Express rider, made several trips across the plains to bring emigrants west after his first trip to Utah in 1857.

One of Mr. Wintle's sons, John Wesley Wintle, at present (1937) principal of the Lewis Junior High School in Ogden, recently said, "We regret that the full story of father's interesting life was not written down before he died.

"He often related to me that when the first message of President Lincoln's election was sent west to California that he helped carry it, and rode 110 miles in five hours with ten changes of horses.

"At the inception of the Pony Express my father was just twenty years old. He related that when the service first begun there was a great celebration and all the persons in the towns along the way turned out with music and guns. My father was waiting with his saddle horse to receive the bag of mail when the firing of guns, just at the moment he swung into the stirrups with the bundle of messages, so frightened the horse that the animal climbed right over a large pile of timbers and galloped on its way. I believe this incident happened at St. Joseph, Missouri.

"Later he was engaged in carrying the express from Cottonwood Spring to Fort Kearney on the South Platte River.

"Father related that one time he had a bad scare when a rider coming eastward passed him (going westward) and informed father he had been ambushed and exhibited a bullet hole in his hat. Despite the fact that father knew he was going into country where hostile Indians were likely to be encountered he proceeded and got through safely.

"On another occasion father related that he was chased by a number of Indian warriors who kept firing at him with guns and shooting arrows. His grain-fed horse outdistanced the Indians' horses, and after a run of several miles father arrived a a relay station where armed men rushed out to defend him and drive away the attackers. Just as father dismounted his horse dropped dead. Another mile



JOSEPH BARNEY WINTLE

and he would never have been able to win that race!

"Another time father related that one dark night he rode without warning right into an Indian camp. Altho inwardly quaking, he did not show fear and handing the reins to a warrior he dismounted and entered a lodge where he was treated kindly. Soon he went his way without molestation.

"Some months later while on his weary ride father learned at one of the relay stations, that the Indians were on the warpath. Suddenly topping a hill just at dusk, father rode into sight of a large Indian camp. It was too late to turn back, so with a show of bravado, he galloped his horse directly up to the side of an Indian man at the edge of the circle of lodges. Dismounting, father displayed no fear, but made a bluff at tightening his saddle girth. His horse was quick and well trained and, crossing to the off side of the horse, the rider suddenly grasped the saddle horn and swinging himself into the saddle and stirrups was gone, while the eager horse shied at a dozen warriors who had, by this time, rushed from their teepees and fired ineffectively at the speeding figure.

"A man of small build, he was just the right size for Pony Express work, and being light and wiry he made a good rider. When the Pony Express disbanded, father returned to Utah,

where he farmed and operated a meat business for many years.

"In September, 1862, father married Sarah Evans, who was born in England, April 24, 1843. A few months later, on February 12, 1863, father and his new wife drove from Ogden out West a few miles to the town of Wilson. It was necessary to ford the Weber River near the place where 24th Street now crosses the river. Father got the ox team across successfully in the morning and he and his wife spent the day visiting some relatives. Enroute home later in the day father and his wife were accompanied by his cousin, a boy named Sewell. When they drove into the ford the river had risen, and my father's wife and the Sewell boy were drowned. At the time father was using only the running gears of a wagon with a few planks laid on them. The oxen saved themselves. Father nearly succeeded in rescuing his wife, but the icy, rushing waters claimed two victims. The body of the boy was never found, but the body of father's wife was later recovered.

On April 2, 1863, father married Mary Marinda Wilson, who was my mother, at West Weber. They had fourteen children, nine of who lived to adulthood.

"The family resided at Wilson from 1863 to 1870, and at Hooper, Weber County, from 1870 to 1885. Then the family moved to Burch Creek near Ogden and later returned to Wilson. In 1892 the Wintle family moved to Ogden.

"Father died of pneumonia, January 1, 1916. Although he often told us stories of the early days and of his experiences as a Pony Express rider on

the plains, we did not realize the importance of writing these experiences down on paper while he was still alive. There is no doubt that much pioneer history has been lost in similar fashion throughout the nation.

"William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) was a Pony Express rider, and he was a friend of father's. Whenever Cody came to Ogden with his Wild West show he always gave father and his family complimentary tickets. Cody also presented father with a letter and a medallion symbolic of the express riding days. Cody died a year later than father, in 1917."

Close persons never get next to themselves.

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