

Rosel Hyde

The parents of Rosel Hyde, Heman and Polly Wyman Tilton Hyde, moved from Strafford, Vermont (where their first child was born) to York, Livingston County, New York, about 1812 or 1813. In York, four more children were born to them, Rosel being the second of these four. Rosel was born 20 May 1816, and was named after his father's brother Roswell - the name being purposely shortened.

In 1825 the family moved to Freedom, Cattaraugus County, New York. Here Rosel probably received most of his schooling, though he may have acquired some in York. The available education on the frontier was not very extensive, but Rosel's beautiful penmanship points to the assumption that he was able to take advantage of all the schooling there was to be had.

His father was a "well situated and much respected" member of the Freedom community, living in the Fish Lake settlement. He cleared his own land with help from his sons. He also was in partnership with Josiah Cheney, operating a wool carding and cloth dressing business. By work and example he and his wife taught their children to respect their fellowmen, and to be ever kind and helpful to the weary and poor. Too, they were religiously inclined, Heman helping to organize the Presbyterian Church in Freedom in 1827.

Mother Polly, was an especially staunch Presbyterian who was converted to Mormonism by Joseph Smith himself. This conversion took place in 1834 in Freedom, where a branch of the Church was organized soon after the baptism of Rosel's older brother Heman Tilton Hyde.

Along with the others of his family Rosel was privileged, as his children so often aptly phrased it, to "hear the Gospel in its purity." He related it this way:

"In the winter of 1833 I first heard the Gospel preached by an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, previous to which time I had the privilege of seeing a portion of the proof sheets from which the Book of Mormon was printed. The reason I did not embrace the Gospel sooner was because of a sort of shyness on my part, being at that time but a young man and never having joined myself to any religious body."

All the family, except Rosel, joined the Church during 1834. Even though Heman had a burning conviction of the truth of the Gospel, he realized that each person has to gain his own testimony, and he did not censure his son Rosel for his delay, but told him it was all right if he did not join the Church just then--that he should think it over a bit if he wanted to.

Rosel continues: "Prior to my being baptized, I removed with my Father's family to Kirtland, Ohio, in obedience to the call of the authorities of the Church, and was present at the dedication of the 'Temple of the Lord' in that place." It was February 1836 when the family moved to Kirtland and the temple was dedicated in late March of the same year. Since Rosel was not baptized, he could not attend the dedication meeting, but was out on the farm and "witnessed the cloud and pillar of light that rested on the temple," saw the heavenly light that surrounded the temple, and heard the sound like the rushing of many waters. After what he saw and heard at that time he needed nothing more to convince him, and soon afterward he asked for baptism.

Rosel was baptized and confirmed on 9 May 1836 by Joel H. Johnson at Kirtland, Ohio. By this time Rosel had many occasions to become acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith, and could well echo the sentiments of Joel H. Johnson, who said, "The words of life from his mouth (the Prophet's) . . . filled my heart with joy and thanks to God."

According to Rosel's son, George Tilton Hyde, Rosel was a man of good judgment, strict in his views. He was endowed with a sound business sense, was prudent and thrifty. He was slow to anger and would suffer wrong rather than create a fuss with other people. He was reticent, a very logical thinker. It is no surprise then, to learn that he was the last in his father's family to accept Mormonism. We consider it a credit to him and an accent on our excellent heritage to know that Rosel's decision to join the Church was no spur-of-the-moment reaction to the area's "revival fire." He had a sound conviction of the truth of the restored Gospel.

Rosel states, "In the fall of 1838 I accompanied my Father's family to Huntsville, Missouri, within two days drive of Far West. Here we remained a few days in the woods where we were discovered by a mob, who compelled us to leave the state. This resulted in our retreat to Quincy, Illinois, where we wintered." Quincy is about fifty miles south of Nauvoo.

The next winter, on 12 December 1839, Rosel was married to Mary Ann Cowles "at a little place called Payson," where Rosel had settled on a farm the preceding spring. Payson is a few miles southeast of Quincy. Rosel and Mary Ann lived in Payson for the first three and one-half years of their marriage. Here two daughters blessed the household - Martha Ann in 1841 and Sarah Maria in 1843.

While Sarah Maria was still a tiny baby, Rosel moved his family to Bear Creek settlement, Hancock County, Illinois, about sixteen miles from Nauvoo and seven miles from Carthage. They made the move that they might more readily help with the building of the temple and be closer to the mainstream of Church events. Being near the center of affairs had its darker side, however. As Rosel stated, ". . . [We] passed through those bitter scenes of persecution so well understood by those acquainted with the history of the Church."

Rosel and his family came to know the Prophet Joseph Smith quite well. Some of the Prophet's land joined the Hyde property, so they had opportunity to get to personally know each other. Rosel mentioned Joseph's great enjoyment of mingling with young folks, and was very struck by the Prophet's unusual eyes--the eyes of a man who had seen and talked with God. Rosel "was also an eye witness to many of the vexations and lawsuits to which the Prophet of God was subject from time to time."

On 27 June 1844 Rosel was working in his field when friends came by and told him that the Prophet Joseph had been martyred. This was indeed a shock, and Rosel's comment was, "They have just killed one of the greatest men that ever lived." Rosel considered the Prophet as a dear and personal friend, as well as his spiritual leader. Mary Ann had lived and worked in the Prophet's home and her children had sat on his knee. Later Rosel kept a picture of Joseph Smith hanging in his home. He spoke so often and devotedly of the marvelous man that his younger children felt that they too knew the Prophet.

Rosel and Mary Ann attended the special conference in Nauvoo on August eighth after the Prophet's death. They testified many times of the transfiguration of Brigham Young into the likeness of the Prophet Joseph. Even though their leader was dead, the Church carried on under the direction of the Twelve Apostles. Rosel was ordained a Seventy on 8 October 1844.

The afflictions heaped upon the Saints grew worse, but with diligent effort the temple was partially finished, enough for some ordinances to be performed. Rosel and Mary Ann felt fortunate to receive their endowments on 7 January 1846, though they were not able to be sealed to each other before the temple closed.

On the 18th of May 1846 Rosel, Mary Ann and their three small children joined the driven Saints in leaving Nauvoo, "our beautiful city, made so by the arduous toil, privations, and hardships of the Saints." Rosel's family traveled in company with the families of his father, brothers and sister.

The group arrived at Council Bluffs on July 12. Four days later Rosel's brother William was mustered into the Mormon Battalion, with unsettled feelings about leaving his family. He wrote: ". . . We, like Abraham, by the commandment of Heaven were en route for a home, we knew not where . . . far from the land which we had once called civilization, with no dwelling, save a wagon, with the scorching midsummer sun to beat upon them (my family), with the prospect of the cold December blasts finding them in the same place."

The next winter William returned. His narrative gives the following: "December 12 (1847), I crossed the Missouri River and rode to Council Point, a distance of 12 miles, where I found my family and father's house . . . I spent the winter with my family and friends. In the spring my brother Rosel and I did what we could to assist father and he took his departure for the Salt Lake Valley. I spent the summer on the farm which my father and brother had opened, and my brother hired to drive a team for the government, with an agreement between us that our income for the season should be for our mutual interest, that if possible both might be prepared the ensuing season to take our departure for Salt Lake."

William also tells of their trek west: "In the spring of 1849 I started with my family, in company with my brother Rosel and his family, for Salt Lake City. The Lord had blessed our labours so much so that we were comfortably fitted for the journey. Brother Samuel Gully, who had the charge of the hundred, died with the cholera soon after reaching the Platte River. Some four or five died with the same disease. We reached the Valley the 22nd day of September."

Their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley was an occasion of great rejoicing, at the success of their journey, and for the happy reunion with loved ones. Earlier William had written of their determination to follow the Lord's Prophets: "My father and all his household, were fully convinced previous to being baptized that God had set his hand for the last time to prune the earth, and that in fulfillment of his word He would gather together a people who would serve Him and be prepared to escape the distress that should come upon the nations (and) as well for the coming of the Son of Man when he should be revealed in the glory of his Father. This being our faith, our first object was to gather with the Saints agreeable to the revelations which God had given."

Rosel expressed himself well in referring to their long period of hardship and their eventual arrival in Zion: "After suffering the most heart rendering persecution that a cruel mob, actuated by the spirit of devils, could inflict upon us in the shape of burning houses, burning standing grain, etc., and which finally resulted in the martyrdom of our beloved Prophets, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and the expulsion of the Saints from Nauvoo to the desolate wilderness situated among the Rocky Mountains where we arrived on the 22 of September 1849, we again enjoyed another season of rest from the many toils, privations and persecutions to which we had been exposed."

Rosel and Mary Ann lived in Salt Lake City for nearly four years, building a house the year after he arrived, and spending this time farming. Here two more daughters were born: Mary Louisa in 1851 and Helen Elvira in 1852. One of Rosel's children wrote of him: "It is wonderful to me how his life has been preserved, as he always was a weakly man. He moved to Kaysville in 1853 because he had such poor health in Salt Lake City and thought the change might be beneficial." His daughter Mary Ann said that he often became so faint during his years of work on the Kaysville farm that he would come into the house and ask his wife or girls to bring him something quickly, even if just a small crust of bread, to restore his strength. But having relatively poor health did not deter Rosel Hyde from serving his God, his family, or his neighbors, and he was preserved to perform his labors long and well.

In Kaysville, then called Kays Ward, a settlement only three years old, Rosel located to a farm about one mile north of the village. The farm consisted of about 55 acres in one piece and 10 acres in another. He soon built a three-room log house with a dirt-covered roof - that often leaked during

heavy rainfall. The dirt in front of the house was hard dirt and was swept often to keep it clean.

In February of 1855 the second son, Heman, was born. Within a short time Rosel and Mary Ann were sealed for time and all eternity by the authority of God vested in (according to family records) Wilford Woodruff. They had their six children sealed to them, making their family a complete unit in the priesthood.

By the spring of 1858 Rosel was well established and felt comfortable in his surroundings, even though they were simple. Undoubtedly it seemed to him and Mary Ann that they had moved enough times and undergone their share of hardships. But Johnston's Army was threatening just east in Echo Canyon, and Rosel, with his wife soon expecting their seventh child, answered the call of Brigham Young to leave their home vacant and move south. They did not know but that their home and crops would be burned and they would have to start over again, but they believed in the Prophets of God. Their son, Austin Cowles, was born in April in Salt Lake City, not long after they started their journey south.

Upon returning to Kaysville, Rosel was called to be one of the counselors in the bishopric. He was a counselor to two bishops for nineteen consecutive years. He was so well respected in the community that he was also made County Selectman (County Commissioner), which office he held for five successive terms (1858-1873), almost as long as he was in the bishopric.

During the winter of 1859-60 Rosel answered the call of the Church and served a mission in New York State, probably arriving home about the time of the birth of his son Charles Corydon in May 1860.

In 1860 or 61, Rosel sent a team by one of the brethren, to assist a company of Saints to get to Utah. In the company was the family of Samuel and Hannah Maria Shackel Simmons. Their daughter Hannah Maria, being a delicate girl, was not permitted to walk much of the way, and was assigned to the wagon drawn by Rosel Hyde's team, which same wagon carried her family's belongings. One day while she was riding, the teamster told her that the oxen pulling them belonged to one of the finest men in the Valley, and that he thought someday she would marry him. "Has he a wife?" asked Hannah. When the answer was "yes" she was shocked and astonished that he

would make such a suggestion. When the group reached the Valley, the Simmons family was taken to the home of Rosel Hyde, a member of the bishopric. Here they received shelter and food until they became located in a little place for themselves. Hannah helped in the Hyde home, doing housework, etc. Soon Rosel and Mary Ann grew to love her dearly. Hannah was only two years older than Rosel's son James, and James liked her too. But her choice was to marry Rosel. So on 22 February 1862, Hannah, age 18, and Rosel were sealed as husband and wife, in the Endowment House.

The friendship and love of the two women had been growing ever since Hannah arrived at the Hyde home. Between them was an unusual bond of trust and understanding. Both were rather frail physically; they were perhaps poorly equipped by nature to become the wives of a pioneer farmer; however, they each bore him a large family. Each had great spiritual stature, and a firm commitment to God, Christ, and the latter-day prophets.

Rosel built a good two-story home of rock and adobes in town, one block east of the meetinghouse, and moved Mary Ann and her family into it. It was here where he entertained the Church Authorities who visited the Ward. Hannah lived in the log cabin on the farm. She soon adjusted herself to the hard work of a farmer's wife and carried the main burden of the household work, including cooking the meals for the farm help.

The next summer, as Captain of a church train of fifty freighting teams, Rosel returned to Winter Quarters . . . "and brought a company of emigrants to Salt Lake City. This trip occupied him from April to September. It required a full two months to make the trip from Council Bluffs to Salt Lake. On that trip his train was stopped and thoroughly searched by Fort Bridger troops who feared the freighters were bringing in arms and ammunition to aid the Mormons. No such freight was found, however, and their goods were not molested.

While Rosel was gone, the wives were a great help and consolation to each other, each of them giving birth to a baby. William Alonzo was born to Mary Ann in June (her last child), and Samuel was born to Hannah in August. Shortly before Rosel's return baby Samuel died. This was a great sadness to Hannah, to lose her firstborn.

In 1869-70 an exciting event transpired--the railroad came! Rosel donated the right-of-way through his property to the railroad.

A glimpse into the personality of Rosel is given by his son George. "My father was a man of approximately six feet in height--straight and tall and slim. He was absolutely honest in every way, shape and form . . . He was strictly temperate--never touched liquor or tobacco. He did not use vulgar or profane language nor associate with those who did. He was strict in the payment of his tithes and offerings. He paid a tenth of everything produced on the farm - the vegetables, the orchard produce and all of the livestock and poultry. Sometimes we boys thought he tithed it doubly, but we always had that example before us of his marvelous honesty and strict living. He was always considered faithful and energetic, and *very* careful of what he said and what he would do. His example was very wonderful for all of the children, especially his thrift and his honesty. He had a holy horror of debt and when he died there was plenty of money laying in his bureau drawer for his funeral expenses. He was a man of good judgment, kind and gentle and slow to anger. In fact, I never saw him really angry. He would suffer wrong rather than have a fuss with a neighbor. He was a strict disciplinarian, without ever having whipped us. We all understood perfectly that our work must be done before we went off to play."

During the 1870's four children were born to Hannah. The children were indeed welcome, but the log home was becoming less able to fulfill its necessary functions, so Rosel built a two-story adobe house on the farm, and the old cabin was abandoned.

One group of Indians in particular was well known to Rosel's family--the group headed by "Indian Jake." Jake's people would come to Kaysville in the fall and get the gleanings of wheat from the part of Rosel's land which was on the west side of Kaysville railroad tracks. He also had a creek near there where the Indians would come, with permission, to glean and camp. Rosel would let them put their grain in his log-house-turned-granary while they got it ready to go to Salt Lake City to trade. They often left a small Indian girl, perhaps ten years of age, at the Hyde home while they went to Salt Lake. The Hyde's would braid her hair and put ribbons on the braids and wash her up "pretty." When the parents returned they would undo the braids and take the child and go. They trusted Rosel and knew him well. Hannah even made some clothes for Indian Jake.

In 1877 Rosel was released from the bishopric and on 13 January 1878 was ordained a patriarch by Franklin D. Richards. In the early "eighties" Rosel built additional room onto the new adobe home, sold the house in town, and moved Mary Ann back to the farm. Each of the wives had their separate "apartments" in the home. Rosel later built an extra room onto the house for "Grannie Hyde," his father's widow Elizabeth, but she did not stay long.

Hannah died on 19 March 1892, when her youngest child was nine years old. She was buried in the Kaysville Cemetery.

Rosel and Mary Ann celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary on 12 December 1899, with their posterity gathering from near and far, giving beautiful tribute to their parents.

On 1 December 1901 Mary Ann departed from this life and Rosel followed less than two years later, on 20 August 1903. President Joseph F. Smith spoke at Rosel's funeral. During the talk he pointed to the casket and said, "There lies a man without guile; I envy him his reward." Both Rosel and Mary Ann are buried in the Kaysville Cemetery.

Source:

- 1). *Rosel Hyde, Utah Pioneer*, written by Myrtle Stevens Hyde and Ruby Johnson Stewart, 1970
- 2). Patriarchal Blessing of Heman Hyde
- 3). Manchester, Vermont Deeds
- 4). Strafford, Vermont Vital Records
- 5). Patriarchal Blessing of Polly Wyman Tilton
- 6). Endowment House Records
- 7). Writings of George Tilton Hyde
- 8). Strafford, Vermont Census 1790, 1800
- 9). Nauvoo Temple Records
- 10). Hyde Family Records
- 11). York, New York Census 1820, 1825
- 12). Records of Charles Walker Hyde
- 13). Descendants of Humphrey Hide, by Willard S. Morse
- 14). Journal of William Hyde
- 15). Logan Temple Records
- 16). Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, p. 117
- 17). Writings of George Tilton Hyde
- 18). Record of Rosel Hyde
- 19). Obituary of Heman Hyde
- 20). History of the Church, Vol. II, pp 42, 43, 61, 63, 184, 123, 139, 428
- 21). Early LDS Church Records File
- 22). Nauvoo LDS Records
- 23). Exodus to Greatness, by Preston Nibley, p 206

24). Early Salt Lake City 13th Ward LDS Records