

William Randolph Teeples

The first immigration of the Teeples family to the United States took place on May 10, 1708, and others followed on June 13, 1710. They came from the Palantine Valley in Germany because of the persecution of the King. Eventually, every inhabitant of the Valley left their homes, and another immigration to the United States occurred in October 1722.

The first group to leave Palantine were the more well-to-do, who were able to make due preparation, and to arrive in America financially able to establish themselves in their new homes.

The second immigration came after suffering some of the most bitter persecution ever experienced in history. They had been robbed of all their possessions, completely destitute, broken in body and spirit. Three thousand men, women and children began the journey, crowded in three small boats, but 470 of them died on the way. Those who arrived still alive, were obliged to work years to pay back the money advanced to them by firms or individuals for passage expenses. It is said that the lot of these people was harder than the lot of negro slaves - so hard and long did they labor to pay back the money advanced. The greater part of them settled in Pennsylvania, but a few found their way into New Jersey and into Schoharie County, New York.

Although in the beginning, there were three or four times as many Germans as English people in these new settlements, the Palantine immigrants were obliged to respect and look up to the English, and to adopt their language. It is estimated that three-fourths of the present-day inhabitants of Pennsylvania are of German or Dutch descent, many of them descended from the Palantine. The English soon learned that these Germans could not be driven to do anything they did not want to do, and gradually and with patience, they worked on, eventually to success.

The account of the Teeples family is too lengthy to read at this time; they fought in the Revolutionary War, gained prominence in civic and Church affairs in the United States and in Canada, and helped to blaze trails on various frontiers.

William Randolph Teeples, son of George Bentley Teeples and Huldah Colby, was "born June 7, 1833 at Huron, Huron County, Michigan. His parents were baptized into the Mormon Church in 1834, and his father received a Patriarchal Blessing from Joseph Smith, Sr. William Randolph was ten years of age at the time of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum, and remembered well when their bodies were brought home for burial. His family were closely associated with the Prophet's family and the other Saints in Nauvoo; their own home was destroyed three different times by fires set by members of the mobs. They came to Utah in 1848, crossing the plains in Heber C. Kimball's company. William Randolph, at the age of fifteen, drove an ox team for Mary Fielding Smith, mother of President Joseph Fielding Smith. He, with his parents, became one of the first settlers of Provo, Utah County. He was baptized in Nauvoo, by Elder Zenos H. Curley, in 1842.

William Randolph Teeples was married three times. My grandmother was the second wife, and we have heard her say that the years she lived in polygomy were the most profitable years of her life, she learned patience, tolerance and unselfishness; she even taught, one of the other wives to read and write. There must have been a feeling of love existing in the home, because the third wife named her own first child after my grandmother's father and brother.

My grandmother, Harriet Betsy Cook, one of sixteen children, was the daughter of Bishop Phineas W. Cook and Ann Eliza Howland, also pioneers of 1848. She was born October 28, 1844 at Richland, Kalamazoo County, Michigan. She married my grandfather, August 21, 1859, with her father performing the ceremony. The marriage was solemnized September 25, 1862 in the Endowment House. To them were born eight children: Harriet Rita, Beatrice Ann Eliza, William George, my father Alonzo Randolph, Phoebe Henrietta, David Wolcott, Alice Aurelia and Eunice Rosila.

William Randolph Teeples learned the blacksmith trade when a young man. He participated in the early Indian wars in Utah; he served in the Echo Canyon campaign during the Johnson's Army troubles. He assisted in starting the cotton industry in southern Utah. He was one of the first settlers of Bear Lake Valley, arriving there December 7, 1863. In a little log house, built with thatched roof and dirt floor, their second child, Beatrice Ann Eliza, was born March 31, 1864; the first white child born in Bear Lake Valley. A floor was built in one corner of the cabin, from the boards of Grandfather's wagon-box. Wild hay covered the rest of the floor and they were quite comfortable because it was a mild winter.

In order to be on the trail of the people traveling to Oregon, my grandfather moved to Montpelier, where he build a house and a blacksmith shop. He had plenty of work to do, shoeing the horses and mending the wagons of the travelers. Money was scarce and merchandise was expensive, at one time my grandmother gave a twenty-dollar gold piece for 16 yards of factory cloth, from which she made undergarments by hand. She helped to teach some of the ladies of the community to spin wool, weave and sew their outer clothing, and to make hats from straw.

The men in the community dug a pit, across which they placed logs to saw for flooring and finishing lumber. One man would stand in the pit, and the whipsaw would be drawn up and down through the entire length of the log. From such lumber, my grandfather built a new cabin with floors.

Trout was plentiful in the streams nearby, and antelope roamed the surrounding hills; flour was purchased at Logan, and gardens were planted. The wheat that was planted in April (1865) was frozen in August by an early frost. It was the beginning of a very hard winter. The wheat was harvested, although it had been frozen; a little wild hay was gathered from the fields. The snow became so deep that most of the cattle died, but a few were kept alive with the shrunken wheat and the small amount of wild hay. The people had not anticipated such a long, hard winter. At times, only the smoke from the chimneys of houses marked their location, fences were completely snowed over, also.

In the Fall of 1865, William Randolph and his wife, with their two little girls, moved to Holden, Utah, to escape another hard winter. In the Spring of 1866, the Black Hawk war broke out in earnest; William joined the Militia and all the people on the outskirts moved into town for protection.

At Holden, my father, Alonzo Randolph Teeples, was born May 10, 1870, one of three sons and the only one of Grandmother's boys to reach manhood. The first son William George, was killed by a falling tree; and another son, David Wolcott, died in infancy.

The home my grandparents built in Holden, still stands in good condition, it is a two-story house, built after the English style of architecture commonly found throughout Utah. Here they planted an orchard, bought a molasses mill. From the sugar cane that grandfather planted, he made and sold molasses. He continued, also, with blacksmithing and they lived very comfortably.

In 1878, however, Grandfather was called by Erastus Snow to go to Arizona to establish a colony there; and although it was one of the greatest trials of their lives to leave their comfortable home to begin again in a wilderness, they did not refuse to go. They sold their home, and on the 29th day of October 1878, they began their trip. They traveled past Kanab and Johnson's Settlement, on down the big Colorado River Bank. They were advised to cook enough food to last them while they traveled along the bank of the river, because they would find no wood to burn, everything was petrified to stone. This they found to be true.

They crossed the river on a ferry, climbed the mountain on a narrow dugway across Lee's Backbone, on a trail where the wagon wheels were at times only six inches from the edge, with perilous depths below. Twelve wagons were in the company, and each wagon had to be pulled over the top by all twelve teams, the climbing was so steep.

After the trip down the other side of the mountain, they camped at the foot and spent the night. Next morning they continued their journey over rough and wild Indian country. They hauled water in barrels and the horses became very thirsty with so little allowed for each of them to drink.

When they arrived on the banks of the Little Colorado, they replenished their water supply from the shallow water; forded the river using all possible haste, because they found that the river had a quicksand bottom. On the other side of the river, they were invited to have dinner in the large dining room of the United Order. From there, they traveled on to Snow Flake, Show Low Creek, and finally on Christmas Day, they stopped at a place called "Cluff's Ranch." They had known the Cluff's in Utah, so felt that they had friends there, and decided to pitch their tents for the Winter.

Leaving the women and children and some of the men at Cluff's Ranch, William Randolph Teeples as head of the company, took four other men and went on South to find a place to settle. They traveled through a forest, past Fort Apache, crossed the Gila River into the Gila Valley and decided that here was the place.

When the five men arrived back at Cluff's Ranch, all of them except Mr. Teeples, decided not to return to the Gila Valley. Another company was formed and these men and their families moved on, arriving again in the Valley on April 8, 1879. The first home was built from rough cottonwood logs. Mesquite trees nearby were found to be covered with huge caterpillars which ate all the leaves, but a heavy frost came and killed the caterpillars - - the people believed it to be an act of God, to keep the Mormons from complete despair.

They named the new settlement "Smithville" in honor of President Jesse N. Smith of the Snow Flake Stake, who gave them a Ward Organization. Other people moved into the settlement and a Postoffice was applied for. The Government advised them that there was already a Postoffice by the name of Smithville, Arizona, so gave them the name of "Pima." My father, at the age of nine, helped to carry the chain to mark the site of the town.

Grandfather Teeples was appointed Postmaster in June 1880. He built a little store which my grandmother tended; she also performed most of the duties in the small Postoffice while my grandfather farmed and did blacksmith work. There was little money in the community, so most of the store-goods was sold on credit and very little of this money was ever collected.

At a conference held September 25, 1882, grandfather was ordained a High Priest by Lot Smith, and set apart as Bishop's Counselor. After four years of Pioneer life in Arizona, he became very ill and died from an abscessed liver, on June 5, 1883, at the age of 49. I remember, when I was a child, hearing my father tell of the snakes and insects of Arizona, and of the poisonous gila monsters; and until I was overheard (and corrected) by my father, I used to tell rather boastfully, that my grandfather had died from the bite of a rattlesnake so large that it was bigger than a wagon-wheel when it was coiled up.

Following grandfather's death, my grandmother Harriet Betsy, was appointed Postmistress in his place. As soon as she could collect enough money from the outstanding debts, to buy supplies, she began the long journey back to Garden City, Utah, the home of her people. Her history tells of this trip that took five months' traveling through Indian country, across mountains and rivers and desert, but the account is too long to add to this sketch. She and her small children arrived at Garden City September 16, 1884. The third wife remained, with her children, at Pima.

Grandmother never remarried. Although she was only 40 and had offers of marriage, she always said that no other man looked good to her after having known her beloved William Randolph. She continued her Church work, was reappointed Postmistress, kept another store, took in school teacher boarders and reared her family. My father, the man of the family at 13, had very little schooling except for the teachings of his mother, but I can remember that all through all our early school years, we children received much help from him with our lessons. He carried the mail for his mother's Postoffice, from Paris, Idaho, in mail sacks thrown across his saddle when he was just a boy; he was a very good rider. I remember that mother used to call the attention of us children to the ease and agility of his riding.

I remember once, that mother led me to the door, and pointing to my youngest brother riding across a field, she said, "See, Floyd rides as your father rides, as if he and the horse were one." This isn't a history of my mother, but I might add that she, too, could ride. She used to sit side-saddle, one child sitting in front of her, another clinging around her slender waist from behind, while they rode like the wind, gracefully, joyously, with heads held high. Mother found joy in little things she never seemed to mind the hardships of their early lives. I remember the smile in her eyes, even when she lifted her beautiful face up from the steam of her washing, done on the board with home-made soap.

Mother and father met in Church in Garden City. Mother's whispered comment to the little girl sitting next to her, was "Who is that ugly little boy sitting over there?" but father, after Church, ran all the way home to tell his mother, "Today I saw the girl I'm going to marry." At one time, when he was in Logan buying supplies for his mother's store, he bought the entire supply of candy in gumdrops, because mother had told him that gumdrops were her favorite candy.

Grandmother died at the age of 89 at the home of her youngest daughter, Eunice Teeple McCann. She left behind her a great many stories of the life of my grandfather William Randolph Teeple so that although he died when my father was only a small boy, I feel that I knew him. I am deeply thankful to him, to my grandmother, and to the other Pioneer grandparents and great-grandparents who left me such a rich heritage.

Eva T. Olson, Feb. 1957

Eva Teeple (Hatch) Olson	Born August 22, 1900
Alonzo Randolph Teeple	Born May 10, 1870
William Randolph Teeple	Born June 7, 1833
George Bentley Teeple	Born March 17, 1803
Rhoda Bentley Teeple	Born 1766
Green Bentley	Born 1741
Bathsheba Green Lewis Bentley	