

JUSTUS WELLINGTON SEELEY

History of Justus Wellington Seeley II Compiled by Mildred Brown Castle Dale, Utah 1970

Justus Wellington Seeley was born June 25, 1850, at the fort in Salt Lake City. He was the fifth child born to Justus Wellington Seeley and Clarissa Jane Wilcox. His parents were pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.

Just two months after his first birthday, his father received a call from Brigham Young to settle the San Bernardino Valley. In 1851 the family arrived in California, where they lived for six years. They planted grape vines, started saw mills, and helped to build up the valley. On December 24, 1857, they were called back to Utah by Brigham Young. Due to the threat of Johnston's army, the Saints were called home to defend Zion.

The trip back to Utah might have been fun for the younger children, but it had its dangers and trails that they were unaware of. Traveling with babies was difficult, but life had to proceed. Small children were bathed and cared for in the moving wagon, as were as many other chores as possible. Indians roamed the countryside, stealing what they could, and in general being a nuisance. It was a time of hunger for these nomads. The story is told that while camped one night, Indians stole into camp, and the next morning one of the boys, Don, discovered that his pants had been stolen from under his head while he slept. It was also discovered that all the baby clothes that had been spread over the bushes to dry were missing, along with a large log chain. Mr. Seeley went after the Indians, and upon finding them, promised to cook them a large pot of mush, if the stolen articles were returned. He returned to camp, and the pot of mush was prepared. Soon the Indians entered the camp with a lot of noise, and the articles that were stolen with such stealth, were returned with a lot of fan fare. Eagerly the hungry Indians crowded around the pot, and those who were too hungry to wait would stick their fingers into the boiling mush and lick them off. Those at the back were getting impatient, and one young buck dipped his hand into the mush, grabbed a handful, and slapped it to the bare back of one of the Indians. With a roar of pain, the Indian ran to the Muddy River and leaped into the cool waters.

Each campsite seemed to have some element of excitement about it. At one of the camps, near the site of the Mountain Meadow Massacre, the boys found the bones of some of these unfortunate people. The graves had been shallow, and the wild animals had dug up the bodies. One of the boys took a skeleton and thrust it into the wagon opening, and terrified the girls. Another boy found a gold watch. It was at another camp that young Justus Wellington lost a shoe in the camp fire. Shoes were a necessity at this time of year. When they chanced to meet a pony express rider on his way to California, an order for new shoes was sent back with him. The family continued on their way, and sometime later the rider caught up with them, and the boy received his new shoes. This was a very unusual special delivery package, and the last pair of shoes that the boy received until he was sixteen years old. The children would go barefooted in the summer time, and in the winter they had to stay inside, unless they were lucky enough to have a pair of moccasins.

On their trip to Utah, they ran low on water. The water holes were dry and the situation was getting desperate. They soon had little water for the everyday necessities and for the livestock. The family decided to fast and pray for guidance and the much needed moisture. After a period of fasting and praying, the sky began to get black, and ominous thunder clouds soon covered the area where they were. The rain came down in torrents. The wagon covers were washed clean of the dirt, and the family put every available container out to catch water, and it was more than enough to satisfy their needs.

The Seeleys arrived in Pleasant Grove in April 1858. They lived there one year, and then once again they were called by Brigham Young. This time they were to settle Mt. Pleasant in Sanpete County.

During the Blackhawk War, Justus Wellington was too young to be in the regular army, but he was used by the army, as were all the boys his age, as a lookout. The boys would stand watch and sound the alarm at the first sight of Indians. The older men were there, and they did the actual shooting. The boys were used as

guards, as their eyesight was so much better than the old men, and all the young men were out fighting. He was one of the youngest veterans of this war, and he received a pension in his later years.

Justus Wellington took up farming, and he received a call from Brigham Young to settle the Indianola area. He had a nice farm in this area until the land was donated by Brigham Young to the Sanpitch Indians. This land still belongs to these people. He moved back to the Mt. Pleasant area.

He was married February 26, 1872, to Anna Eliza Reynolds of Pleasant Grove, Utah. They had eleven children. In 1877 he took his cattle, which consisted of about seventy head of his own and three hundred head he was herding, into Castle Valley for winter grazing. After his brother Orange received the call to settle Castle Valley, Justus Wellington was persuaded by his brother to come with him.

He had filed on one hundred and sixty acres in Castle Valley, and it soon became necessary for him to locate on the land, or he would lose it. It was not a good time to moving, as his wife was pregnant. The trip was undertaken, just seven days out of Mt. Pleasant, a baby daughter, Clarissa, was born in Cottonwood Canyon, at the Willow Bunch.

The first lumber house in Castle Dale was built by Justus Wellington in 1881. It was erected on the Seeley farm, not far from the Seeley dugout. In 1889 he erected the first brick house in Castle Dale, and possibly the first in Emery County. The bricks were shipped in, possibly from Morgan, Utah. The mason work was done by Bishop Henning Olsen. The roof was covered with native shingles that lasted until 1932. This lovely home still stands and is occupied by his daughter, Mrs. Dora Otterstrom.

With his brother Orange, he built the first burr mill in Castle Dale. Later his brother sold out, and Justus turned it into a roller mill in 1899, and it then became the first roller mill in Emery County. Justus later sold his interest in the mill to a Lewis Allen. He had co-signed on some notes for a few people, and when they defaulted, he was held responsible for the notes and had to sell the mill to raise the money.

At his own expense, Justus Wellington sponsored and installed the first lights in Emery County, and the first this side of the Wasatch Front. The water power plant was in connection with the mill. Later a steam engine was installed, and the dynamo was turned by steam power. The first house to be wired was William Seeley's, and then they wired Justus Wellington's home. Lights were turned on as soon as the houses could be wired. Every evening the lights were turned on just before dark, and they were turned off at midnight. The lights would be blinked on and off about fifteen minutes before twelve o'clock as a warning to the people. If a dance was being held and they wanted to go on past midnight, some one would go the plant and ask that the lights be left on until later. The power plant brought new luxuries to the area. William Seeley owned the first washing machine, and Mrs. Justus Wellington Seeley had the first electric iron. It was a very heavy iron with many layers of asbestos. Both the washing machine and the iron were placed on exhibit. Justus Wellington never did realize a profit from his power plant, but he felt that it was for the good of the community.

Justus Seeley was eager that the valley have the best that was available in education, so he went to Brigham Young University in Provo to talk with Karl Maeser. They discussed organizing the Emery Stake Academy. The school would be for the members of the stake, which at the time was very large. The school was approved and came into being March 23, 1889. The letter from Wilford Woodrow of the Church Board of Education was read at a meeting held in the County Courthouse in Castle Dale. The Board of Education was organized, with Justus Wellington as president. He worked hard for the school and spent years on the finance committee. Each fund raising drive was a success with him at the helm. If the goal was not met, then he would donate the balance, and this often made it a little hard for his family, but he felt that he was benefiting from the school, as his children were attending.

On June 25, 1892, Justus Wellington Seeley was released from the Emery Stake Academy Board of Education so he could accept a mission call to Kentucky. This was a hardship for him, as he had a very large family. During his mission he converted a family by the name of Cash. Mr. Cash came to Castle Dale and served as the postmaster for many years.

On November 18, 1895, Anna Eliza Reynolds Seeley was thrown from her carriage, she died the same day. Justus Wellington again married on September 16, 1896 to Mary Jorgensen, from Mt. Pleasant. They had four children.

Justus Wellington Seeley served as Mayor of Castle Dale during World War I. He was also a state delegate to the National Republican Convention in 1928. This was a convention that nominated (*it says*

Hoover and then it is crossed out) for the presidency. He was always busy in one way or another. He made a muster roll of the men who fought in the Indian Wars. He traveled all over the state, at his own expense, collecting information and searching for witnesses who could verify the men's participation. Many widows were able to get pensions, due to this humanitarian effort.

One spring Justus and his brother Orange made a trip from Price to Mt. Pleasant. When they reached Thistle, they found a large encampment of Indians, who welcomed them like long lost brothers. They soon found themselves invited to dinner. Both of these men were loved by the Indians, and Justus Wellington spoke the Ute language fluently. For the dinner they were served sausages that were stuffed with crickets. As Justus had a weak stomach, he found it impossible to eat the food, while Orange pretended to eat with great gusto. It was a great relief to the men when the train came and they could continue on their way. I imagine that this is one time these men were glad to leave the table.

The Justus Wellington Seeley family loved to go camping, and they would take trips in the covered wagon to the mountains. Sometimes it was for fun and they would fish the streams, while other times it would be for a special trip to Mt. Pleasant. It would take three days to go to Mt. Pleasant, and it was a time for fun. While they would travel along, the children would be enthralled with their father's tales of adventure. Once they made the trip to Roosevelt in the covered wagon, and they just spent the time in the mountains having a good time.

Justus had large herds of sheep, and they used the San Rafael desert for grazing. It was a tremendous effort to keep the camps in food and supplies, while were hauled out in the desert by means of pack mules. William Seeley, a son of Justus, was a studious young man, and whenever he came into town for supplies, he would carry back books with him to read. It was a constant search for new reading material that gave him the idea of lending library. A careful search was made until the appropriate location, one suitable to the storage of books, could be found. It was very important that the spot be free from moisture, and that it be comparatively safe from animals. The search required some work but the effort paid off. A small cave was found, books were stored, and the library opened. Each of the herders in the San Rafael desert would place his books and magazines in the library, and there was quite a variety in the books. The location of this library is unknown, but what a find it would be if a person chanced to find it. Who knows, there still may be remnants of these old books, or even books in comparatively good condition in this unusual library, out in the desert.

Justus Seeley was an excellent dancer, and he loved to ride horses. He rode until he was well advanced in age. He was skilled in leather work, and he made lariats' and hack-a-mores. The Indians would stop and visit whenever they were passing through the valley. It was seldom that they came without bringing buckskins for Justus to work with. Young and old would stop, with the old men throwing their arms around Justus. The Indians would be fed and their horses pastured. The Seeley home was an inn to the passing Indians.

Justus Wellington Seeley spent his life trying to be of service to others. He took no task lightly, putting all his might into the job. He gave to anyone in need, and sometimes it was hard on his wife. While they had the mill, people would come from all over to have their grain ground. They came in covered wagons and camped by the mill until their grain was ready. Every day Justus would bring a number of customers home to dinner, which made it difficult for his wife, as she never knew how many to cook for. The coming of the telephone was a blessing to her, as he would call the house and give her advance notice.

Death came to Justus Wellington Seeley on October 10, 1931. His death was brought on by high blood pressure, which precipitated strokes. He left a saddened valley, and many people lost a dear friend. He was buried in the Castle Dale Cemetery.

Justus Wellington and Orange Seeley left their mark upon the valley as did many of the pioneers. They both worked hard for the community. At times it must have seemed to their families that they were working too hard and not getting enough thanks. These men were always there whenever there was a job to be done. Orange honored by having the town of Orangeville named after him. He wanted to have all the people settle on one side or the other of the creek, but when they failed to do so, he decided that there should be two towns. Castle Dale was to have been named Castle Vale, but when the government sent back the charter, the name had been changed to Castle Dale. The people across the creek chose the name of Orangeville, and some thought that they should have taken the name of Castle Dale, and the town were Orange was living should be Orangeville.. One year the people of both towns celebrated Orange's birthday with a band concert and a dance.

While Orangeville was named in honor of Orange Seeley, Justus Wellington had the honor of having the town of Wellington named after him. His sister, Sarah Seeley Tidwell, and her husband, Jefferson Tidwell, were sent to settle the area of Wellington. Some of the people wanted to name the town Jefferson in honor of her husband, but she wanted it named after her brother.

Although these men are now long gone, their contributions remain as a monument to the community service they gave. They answered each call when it came, and the mark left upon the valley is indelibly printed upon the history of time.

(Compiled by Mildred Brown for History Class, Carbon College) Personal interviews of Dora Otterstrom Castle Dale Angie Hayward, "History of Sanpete and Emery Counties, Minute Book of Emery Stake Academy. January and February 1970

FIFTY YEARS AGO

It was July, 1878, we landed in this place,
Our clothes were tore, our feet were sore and sunburnt was our face.
I was just a lad of twelve years old, how strange it seemed to me,
There was no people anywhere, 'twas lonely as could be,
I remember how I stood and looked as far as I could see.
It was bare and burnt and desolate, without a growing tree,
Except along the river banks, it was the only place they'd grow,
For there was no water elsewhere that fifty years ago.

There was just one cabin in the land, just one and that is all;
My father and the boys, they made another one that fall,
That same old cabin stands there yet, 'tis old and worn and low,
But it marks the spot of pioneers of fifty years ago.

There was a dugout down this creek on Seeley's place below;
It was the headquarters in those days for cattlemen you know.
There was cattle on the thousand hills and horses too, you know.
They watered all along the stream those fifty years ago.

And there was all the Seeley boys, Orange, Wink and Don, Joe and
Jess and Bill and Rone and Hy and Dolph and John.
There was Sid and Charles, Joe and Rod, the Swasie boys you know.
They all run cattle in this land that fifty hears ago.

I remember Uncle Orange, how I used to hear him say,
"This land will all be taken up at some near future day."
He was always jolly, he could laugh and joke all night,
And he could eat a half of mutton and his belly would not be tight,
His heart was in proportion with the rest of him you know,
For he helped a poor cuss then, that fifty years ago.

I remember seeing Wink one day, he was going down below,
With a little bunch of horse, 'bout twenty head you know.
"Hello" I cried, "you've got my horse, the sorrel out on that side,
You bet you he's a snuffy cuss, but then he's broke to ride.
That brand of ours is on his thigh, it may be rather dim.
I put it on before he left, I'm sure that that is him."

He laughed and said, "We'll soon find out." His rope was in his hand,
"We'll catch this snotty rascal, then we can find the brand."
His rope went out like lightning and landed 'round his neck,
He rear'd and pulled and bucked and bawled, 'twas fun for me you bet,
But when that rope went 'round the horn and he took up the slack,
That pony found where he was at, for he landed on his back.
I saw Wink look at me and laugh. "He's alright now," he said,
But I wasn't quite so sure of that, I thought my horse was dead.
"Come put your rope around his neck, he's nice and gentle now,
Say where did you get that pony, I'll bet he can head a cow."
"Oh, I got him off an Indian, I traded him a gun."
That Indian said, "Heap Whue horse, pretty good to run."
Oh, I never will forge those days, for men like them you know,
They helped us out in many a way, that fifty years ago.