

John William Cooley (Dwelling #703)



John Cooley was born November 25, 1811 at New Haven, Oswego County, New York. He was the son of Daniel and Mary Butler Cooley. He was the third child of four. A sister, Mary Ann, who later married a William Francis Liddle, was born June 6, 1807 at Pana, Oneida County, New York. There was also a brother, Charles Rensselaer and a sister, Lucy Ann.

John embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ and joined the Church in 1838 on November 12 and was ordained an Elder the same day. He moved to Kirtland, Ohio in 1840 and then to Nauvoo.

John married Hannah Gould, the daughter of Seth Burr and Hannah Sagers Gould. She was born January 10, 1815 at Cramahe, Newcastle, Northumberland County, Upper Canada. To this union was born one daughter, Gennette, on December 20, 1836 in Upper Canada and one son, John Rancler, in 1843. Hannah died March 15, 1843 in Cincinnati, Hamilton, Ohio.

John and his daughter and son traveled to Nauvoo where his son died. He then went onto Big Pigeon where he met and married Susan Jane Hunt in 1849. Susan was the daughter of David Durham and Nancy Davis Hunt. She was born on January 10, 1836 in Granney, Northumberland County, Upper Canada. The couple had two children, Maryetta, born September 8, 1850, and Samuel William, born on August 5, 1852 in Big Pigeon.



In a letter written to President Brigham Young by Ezra T. Benson dated March 16, 1852, John was listed as Captain of the First Big Pigeon Branch which consisted of two-hundred-thirty souls. They were reported as being perfectly united and all going to the valley that season and taking their poor with them. On April 7, 1852, he was reported to have addressed a conference in the Big Pigeon Tabernacle, and on April 14, 1852, he was listed as being a member of the Thirtieth Quorum of Seventies and residing in Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

The Daniel A. Miller/John W. Cooley Company departed from Six Mile Grove on June 8, 1853. There were about 282 people in the Company. During the night of July 9, 1853, while camped at Shepherd's Creek, John's son, Samuel William died. A board was placed at the head of the grave with the following inscription: "S.W. Cooley, age 11 months, son of J.W. Cooley." The Company arrived in the Salt Lake Valley September 9, 1853. Besides his family, his mother, Mary Butler Cooley, made the journey.

Susan Jane Hunt bore four more children while living in either Salt Lake County or in Grantsville, Tooele County. Later he married Nancy Johanna Penelope Hunt, who bore him eight children. Nancy was Susan Jane's sister.



John may have operated the first store in Grantsville. It was just west of the old adobe church-schoolhouse building. Quite a variety of dry goods and most staple groceries were carried in the small store. There was also a hotel for travelers that was run by Susan Jane.

The citizens of the community early realized the need of a sawmill. One was started at Fishing Creek, but John soon opened one up in North Willow Canyon. This was operated by waterpower. This mill soon became more popular because of its accessibility to timber, which cut down the expense of handling and hauling of the timber.

In 1897, John moved to Basin, Cassia County, Idaho to live with one of his daughters. He died on November 18, 1898 and is buried there. Susan lived with a son in Montello, Elko County, Nevada when she died on April 22, 1908 and is buried there. Nancy remained in Grantsville where she died on September 29, 1909 and is buried there.