

Sarah Dowdle (Dwelling #660)



Sarah Ann Robinson was born September 24, 1800 in Grainger County, Tennessee. She was the daughter of Hughes and Elizabeth Jane Porter Robinson.

On May 27, 1818, Sarah Ann married Robert Dowdle. Robert's parents were James and Ann Pickens Dowdle. He was born September 15, 1796 in Anderson, Anderson County, South Carolina.

Robert and Sarah Ann made their home in Franklin County, Alabama where Sarah Ann gave birth to five children: Absalom Porter; Elvira; Caroline; Martha Jane; and Sarah Ann. The next four children were born in Lawrence County, Alabama: Robert Hughes; James Pickens; John Clark; and William Franklin. The Dowdle family was getting well established in Alabama when in the early part of 1844 the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Morris Phelps and William Mathers, came with a few unbound copies of the Book of Mormon which they were invited to read. Within a few days they were both baptized members of the Church and in a very short time some of the children who were old enough were baptized. The family was encouraged to join the main body of the Church in Nauvoo. They bid farewell to oldest daughters, Elvira and Caroline, who didn't join the Church.

They were very poor but started toward Nauvoo. In September 1845, Martha Jane, age 19, contracted a lingering fever and died and was buried in Athens, Clark County, Missouri. This was a great sorrow for the family. They journeyed on to Nauvoo but found everything in turmoil. The Saints were getting ready to leave Nauvoo as soon as possible. Robert and Sarah Ann, with their children, Absalom who had married Sarah Ann Holladay in 1845, Sarah Ann, Robert Hughes James Pickens, John Clark, and William Franklin crossed Iowa and reached the Middle Missouri Valley. Fifty-year-old Robert Dowdle died on September 1, 1847 of lung fever. He was buried in grave #223 in the Winter Quarters Cemetery. After the death of Robert, two sons, Robert Hughes and James Pickens and a daughter, Sarah Ann returned to Missouri to seek work so they could earn something to support the family. They heard nothing from them for several months. John Clark and William Franklin stayed with their mother, Sarah Ann.

The conditions were deplorable but with the help of friend they survived the winter and moved back across the Missouri River and settled in Big Pigeon. Here they planted corn and potatoes. Sarah's daughter met and married John Mathis here in 1849.

The 1850 Census listed: Sarah, age 53; Robert, age 19; James, age 17; John, age 15; and William, age 11. Sarah met another widow, Mary Doyle (Doyal) Clark and her children, Elizabeth, born 1833 in Ohio; William, born 1831 in Kentucky; Mary, born in Illinois and Eliza, born in Illinois. Together they joined the James C. Snow Company which left on July 5, 1852 with 250 Saints and 50 wagons. Sister Clark proved to be an asset on the journey. At one time she and John, Sarah's son, spotted some buffalo and set out to get some meat for supper. She not only killed the buffalo, but she skinned it and took the meat home, sharing it with the other Saints. They were thankful in spite of her tobacco chewing habit that she was traveling with them. It made their journey easier than if Sarah Ann had been traveling alone with her two young boys. John Clark contracted Rocky Mountain spotted fever. He became worse and he was unable to do anything on the last part of

their journey. Sarah was devoted to him during his illness and did all that she could to nurse him back to health. They reached the Valley in October 1852. She was met by Absalom and Robert Hughes who had come previously. They had settled in Provo. Utah County.

James Pickens was preparing to go to Australia on a mission in the spring when he was taken sick and died on January 15, 1853. This left John Clark and his brother William Franklin as the main support for the family. Sarah Ann Robinson Dowdle died on February 15, 1875 at the age of 74. Robert took her earthly remains to Franklin, Franklin County, Idaho and laid her to rest in the Franklin City Cemetery.