



William Parry Bowen  
b. 5 July 1845  
d. 13 June 1930 *ae* 84

## Life of William Parry Bowen

By Jane Bowen Hodgens Tuttle (daughter)

William Parry Bowen, Utah pioneer of 1856, did well his full share in the intermountain empire. He was born in Llanelly, Glamorganshire, South Wales, 5 July 1845, son of Jane Foster and David Bowen.

He first attended school when he was five years old; his teacher being Mrs. Barber, a grey-haired lady past middle age. His second teacher was a Mrs. Miller, who taught him not only the ordinary subjects of the school curriculum, but the art of crocheting as well. Next he attended a school for boys only, supervised by William Williams. This was an exclusive institution under the jurisdiction of the Copper Works Company, and as Grandpa David. Bowen was a man of prominence in that community, his son was admitted to this school which had the distinction of being taught in a large brick building with commodious, well-equipped rooms surrounded by a large playground.

It was at this time that the South Wales Railway, the first in the country, was built and my father remembers the first trip the train made over the road. He had a vivid recollection of the company's two engines which were named for the volcanos, Aetna and Vesuvius. His first ride on the train was a trip over this road from Llanelly to Swansea, which he took with his parents to attend a Latter-Day-Saint meeting.

His parents joined the church in 1848 and in the spring of 1855 they left Liverpool to sail for America. Grandpa had decided to come to Zion with the mormons, much to the disapproval and disgust of his many friends and relatives. They set sail on the ship Chimbarazo 17 April 1855. (This ship was a 1071 ton vessel whose captain was named Peter Vesper. Destination

Philadelphia with 431 saints on board. The president of the company was Edward Stevenson.) Some of the other passengers on this voyage were: Joseph A. Rees with his brother David and their parents, the Prior family of Spanish Fork and a Davis Family who later settled in Springville. The trip on the water lasted six weeks. On their arrival in America the Bowen family went to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

While in Liverpool grandfather paid the L.D.S. Immigration agents money enough to buy the outfit of two cows, four oxen and a wagon with which to cross the plains to Utah. The balance of his money was lost in the Liverpool dock. This misfortune caused a delay of a year in his progress to Zion. He was forced to change his plans. Thus, while he was on the ship he sold the outfit, for which he had contracted, for money enough to support his family while he earned the means for a new outfit. He located at Minersville, Pennsylvania and lived there for a year. At this place. At this place Uncle John was born and father had his tenth birthday.

In 1856 the family left Minersville and came by rail to Iowa City, Iowa, the farthest point west that the railroad had been built to this date. They came from Iowa City to Newton, Iowa in Captain Dan Jones' Company. At Newton John A. Hunt was made captain because Jones and some of the others, who were fortunate enough to own mule teams and carriages, left the slow oxen outfits to travel together at their own pace, while they hurried to Utah in good season during pleasant weather.

Martin's hand-cart company had already begun their weary journey and as the ox team company advanced they were ordered to hold back to help the handcarts along. Thus their progress was impeded and they were thrown late into winter while yet on the plains. However they traveled with few mishaps until they came to the last crossing of the Platte River where they

were overtaken by a severe snow storm. The grass was covered so the men were forced to cut down cottonwood trees for the cattle to browse on.

While they were held up here Joseph A. Young and some others came out from Salt Lake City to meet them and said that farther west the snow was not so deep. This news brought new hope even though the cattle had begun to die. Grandfather had lost three out of four of his oxen and John Lewis had been reduced to one oxen also. These two men yoked the two remaining oxen to Mr. Lewis' wagon, into which they loaded the two families and their possessions which were absolutely necessary for the trip and set out again.

A rescue party from Fort Supply hitched another yolk of oxen to the wagon and helped them to Fort Bridger. With fresh wagons, horse teams and mule teams from Fort Bridger they were taken to Salt Lake City. The wornout ox teams and wagons were left at Fort Bridger with the wagons and oxen of the entire company. The oxen wintered there and most of them were found in the spring.

This side of Fort Bridger where they crossed the little mountain and Big mountain, the snow was so deep they when it was trampled down, walls higher than the tops of the covered wagons were formed on either side of the road. Both of my parents remember this incident. Nearly all the men walked to trample the snow to make a road. Sometimes their boots were frozen so hard that they could not get them off at nights for no fires could be made as the snow was too deep. My father remembers Grandfather sleeping in his boots.

It was the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1856 when these pioneers reached Salt Lake City. Mr. Harvey, Lehi, a member of the rescue party, brought the Bowen family as far as Lehi. Grandfather had expected to meet Thomas C. Martell at Salt Lake City where the latter had secured a house for his old friend. Through some misunderstanding they failed to make

connections and Grandfather decided to come to Spanish Fork. John Sevy and John Mott brought the family from Lehi to this place on Christmas Eve where they found shelter at the home of Morgan Hughes. Here they lived for the balance of the winter.

In the spring of 1857 they built their first home, a dugout, on the lot where David Morgan's house now stands. Later, a new house, the first house on that lot, was built which served as their home for several years.

As a boy, my father helped Grandfather on the farm and in the Blacksmith Shop, which was located on the west side of the present Rees School property. With his companions he herded cows on the east bench. The boys would put their luncheons in a cotton sack and tie them to the cows horns to keep the Indian boys from stealing them. At this time the Indians were friendly.

Later when the Indians were on the warpath William P. Bowen did his share of guard duty as well as put in extra time helping his father repair guns with which to protect the little village against the ferocious tribe.

In 1866, William P. Bowen with twelve other pioneers, was designated to accompany Mr. Reed, the chief engineer of the Union Pacific Railway, to explore a railroad route up Spanish Fork Canyon and through Strawberry Valley. They secured a Ute Indian as a guide. While they were in the mountains a band of unfriendly Indians followed them for three days. One day while they were encamped at noon, one of the party suggested a target practice. As they began shooting at a mark, the red men, discovering that the whites were armed, went away peacefully. Only two of this party are alive at this writing, my father and Joshua Brockbank. David Bowen and his son William made the machinery for the first sawmill in Provo Valley; the rollers for the first molasses mill in Spanish Fork, and one of the first plows that was used in Saint George. These

articles were made from the tires of some of the wagons which brought the supplies to Utah for Johnsons Army.

In pioneer days in Utah, the canals and ditches were made principally by pick and shovel. My father did the ditching this way for 125 shares of water.

In 1868 my father built the home in Spanish fork, 463 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> E., in which eight of his nine children were born. In this same house his eldest son William Jones Bowen's nine children were born here also. This house stood just north of the Rees School on the same lot.

On the ninth of February 1869, at age 24, William Parry Bowen married Ruth Jones in the Endowment House, Salt Lake City. She became the mother of his nine children: Mary Eleanor (Mel) Bowen Larson, Ruth Bowen Warthen, Jane Bowen Hodgens Tuttle, William Jones Bowen (Jonce), David Foster Bowen (Foss), Annie Elizabeth Bowen (Bess) Warren, Elias Llewellyn Bowen, Margret Alice Bowen Huff Peterson (Maude), and John Parry Bown.

In 1873 my parents moved to their farm on the New Survey. Here they lived in a log house which was later replaced by a blue adobe one in which my brother foster was born and has lived a number of years. (Four of his nine children were born there).

My father acquired a great deal of land at different times and places. His next home was built on the Indian Farm on the Spanish Fork River. Here the family lived for about ten years. The place became the home of his eldest daughter and her family, Mary Eleanor Larson.

Father went to the Uintah Basin where he purchased and home-steading he acquired nearly 300 acres of land, later owned by his youngest son John Parry Bowen.

William P. Bowen was baptized into the L.D.S. Church in Wale sin 1854 when he was eight years old. While he was never an enthusiast he held firm to his religion and was ordained in the different priesthoods. At the time of his death he was a member of the High priest quorum.

He was a man of broad vision. His interests were for the community at large to a greater extent than for himself. His dream was to fill the state with the best livestock that could be raised. He abhorred a mongrel of any sort and he spent many thousands of dollars in the purebred cattle, sheep, hogs, and thoroughbred horses.

When he was in the purebred horse business, his brother John E. Bowen was in business with him. At that time purebred Percheon horses were imported from France by different stables in Kansas. William P. and John E. Bowen brought some of these horses to Spanish Fork, Utah. Business was good for awhile but later due to bad luck and depression he was financially ruined. \$50,000 worth of horses were lost in one week.

William P. Bowen was responsible for bringing the draft horse into the state. When he was at the height of his glory in this line of business, he was the most prominent stock raiser and importer of blooded horses and purebred cattle in the state of Utah. He was awarded a score or more of gold medals and diplomas for his horses and cattle. Through his efforts and those of other men of similar ambitions our state now boasts a superior class of livestock.

At the age of 77 my father became afflicted with a paralytic stroke from which he suffered eight years. He was confined to his wheelchair, not being able to walk. His attitude toward his misfortune was one of patience, never complaining of his lot but always looking forward to a better day..

Being rather hard of hearing during his later life, but having exceptionally good sight, he read a great deal. Even at his advanced age he kept himself posted on the new things science and experience were doing for agriculture and stock raising.

In his younger years he was an authority on cattle and horse judging. His advise on agriculture and irrigation was frequently sought as he was a pioneer in irrigation in several sections of the state.

My father was a man of refined nature. He died the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1930. George H. Brimhall who was one of the speakers at his funeral said, "William P. Bowen was as far above vulgarity as the tops of the mountains are from the bogs of the sea."

As a fitting climax to this history I shall ad the poem called;

### The Builder

An old man going a lone highway  
Came at evening, cold and grey,  
To a chasm deep and dark and wide  
With waters rolling cold and deep.  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim;  
The solemn stream held no fear for him.  
But he turned when safe on the other side,  
And built a bridge to span the tide.  
"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,  
"You are wasting your time to build a bridge here.  
Your journey will end at the close of day,  
You never again will pass this way;  
You have crossed the ravine so dark and wide,  
Why build a bridge here at eventide?"

The builder lifted his old grey head;  
"Good friend, in the path I have come to tread,  
There followeth after me today,  
A youth whose feet must pass this way,  
This chasm which has been as naught to me,  
To this fairhaired youth may a pitfall be;  
He too must cross in the twilight dim; Good friend  
I am building a bridge for him."

(Copied this 1th day of August 1958-my 53<sup>rd</sup> birthday-from a copy which Lora (Patt) Bowen loaned me at the Bowen Reunion at Arrowhead-L.B.C.)