

Isaac Leany

Biography of Isaac Leany, 1815-1873 in Autobiography of Willaim Leany, typescript, HBLL Struggles of an 1847 Pioneer By Isaac Leany

Grandfather's [Isaac Leany] first known American ancestor, John Leany, was a native of Ireland. While yet a young man, John married Miss Margaret Means and soon after his marriage came to America, bringing his wife and his father. The family settled in Pennsylvania prior to the French and Indian War.

Like most Irishmen, John seemed always ready to fight for justice, so in 1754 he enlisted as a Pennsylvanian Provincial, and served under Lieutenant General Washington, at what was known as Braddock's Defeat. Then at the outbreak of revolutionary war, John enlisted and served three years under General Washington. After his discharge his father, who was then quite old, was drafted into the service. As the father was too old to stand army life, John took his place, and served another three years. During his service in the army John was with Colonel Dan Morgan at the Battle of Cowpens, with Nathaniel Green at the Battle of Gilford Courthouse, and was under the command of General Washington at the surrender of Lord Cornwallace at Yorktown.

After the war he moved with his family to York District South Carolina(?). Here Culbert Leany, Isaac's father, was reared. Culbert Leany went to Kentucky in 1811 where he helped to survey, build roads and bridges, and lay out and develop Simpson County, Kentucky.

In 1812 he married Miss Margaret Cook, and the following year enlisted under General Jackson for defense of New Orleans against the British. On the day of the battle, June 18, 1813, his oldest son was born, and on December 19, 1815 his wife presented him with twin boys, William and Isaac. They with their brothers and sisters grew up under the disadvantages of frontier life.

Grandfather told of an interesting occurrence while on the old homestead. He said there were spots of soil so rich that the grain would grow tall and rank, falling before it could ripen. Many fragments of human bones were found in these places. One day he picked up a man's thigh bone, so long that when placed under his chin he could hardly reach the end with his fingers. In



**The Haun's Mill Massacre
painted by Danish-born
nineteenth-century Mormon artist
C. C. A. Christensen
as part of the Mormon Panorama.**

the Book of Mormon, speaking of those few that were left at the last great battle, it is said they were large and mighty men, as to the strength of men.

Grandfather while a young man was actively interested in religion, and it was at one of the open air meetings near his home in Kentucky that he first heard a Mormon elder explain the gospel of Jesus Christ. Isaac knew at once that he had found what he had been looking for. Desiring to be near the Saints he went to Illinois, and it was while here he met a young lady whom he married. Leaving Illinois, Isaac went to Missouri where he shared with the rest of the Saints the terrible persecutions of the mob. The 29th of October, 1838 found him with a small number of Saints working at a place called Haun's Mill in Missouri. It was on this day that the mob came upon them demanding that they sign a treaty of peace and deliver their weapons of war. They were allowed no word in the matter and had to comply. Grandfather had no faith in the mob's promise of peace.

October 29th passed peacefully at the mill, but that night grandfather had a dream which was not in the least reassuring. In the dream he seemed to be passing along a trail where there were a great many snakes. They crawled along the ground, hurled themselves through the air and hung twisting and hissing from the limbs of

Isaac Leany

trees. Dodge and hurry as he might his body was soon pierced and bleeding from the attacks of the angry snakes. Finally escaping the serpents he met a man with whom he was acquainted. "Brother Leany," he said, "you are terribly bitten so with snakes and lived." "Well, then, I'll be the first for I'm not going to die," was grandfather's answer. In a patriarchal blessing given to grandfather he was told that he



Leaving Missouri
artist unknown

was a direct descendant of "Joseph, the Dreamer," son of Jacob and that he had inherited the gift of dreams. That dream was a warning and we shall see its fulfillment.

On October 30th, [1838] the mob heavily armed, dashed down on the little party at the mill, and began firing. Grandfather gained possession of three guns, gave two of them to the other men, and placing himself between the mob and the cabin's housing the women and children began firing. Lead was flying around like hailstorm. You may judge how thick was the hail of lead, for while he was preparing to fire, eleven bullets hit the stock of his gun, cutting it off in his hands. One hit and knocked the trigger guard off but the works were still intact, for he loaded and fired it once more and saw one of the mob drop as a result. This of course was a matter of a few seconds. Grandfather could see he was doing little good, and they were cutting him to pieces, so he returned to the cabin, and told the women and children to run for the woods. As he turned a bullet struck him in the right armpit and came out the left. This was not the first wound he had received, for two bullets had gone through his breast and came out his back, and two had passed through his hips. After they shouted [a]

warning to the women and children, Isaac fled for his life, taking a trail leading up a small hill.

As he was running up the hill with much effort, his body bent, a large ball struck him in the back near the kidneys, passing lengthwise through his body. He said only the power of God stopped it from going on into brain. According

to his own words. "This one came nearer to knocking me off my feet than any, the rest just plunked through me as if I were a squash." Knowing he must hurry to help or give up his life, grandfather first sat down to take of his boots, for they were so heavy that it was hard to lift one foot after the other in his weakening condition. He was obliged to split his boots with his knife before he could remove them. As he struggled on he soon met the man he had seen in his dream.

He said, "Brother Leany its no use to encourage you, for no man was ever shot as you are and lived." Then followed the identical conversation of the dream, excepting the substitution of shot instead of snake bite. A little farther on was the home of some friends who took him, and so great was their fear that the mob would follow and kill him, they took up a board and laid him under the floor. His condition was such that he could not stand this long, and on begging, they took him out washed and dressed his wounds and put him to bed. His clothes were literally cut to pieces, and his body almost as bad, for it had been struck by seven bullets, leaving 13 scars, six passing through and through, the 7th struck him in the back leaving but one scar. For some time he lay near death being fed with a spoon, and so weak he could not

Isaac Leany

so much as open or close his eyes. With so many wounds practically all his blood was lost. The elders were called in and he was anointed and promised in the name of Jesus Christ that he would recover. From that time on he recovered rapidly and was soon chopping logs in Illinois for the homes of the Saints.



Shall We Not Go On in So Great A Cause Clark Kelley Price

The 25th of March 1841 Isaac married Miss Sarah Ann Herward in the state of Illinois. Here they lived with the Saints until the enemies of the gospel of Christ forced them to again seek new homes. Near the first of July, 1847 Isaac with his wife and two children, Margaret and George C., also his twin brother William with his wife and one child, left Winter Quarters with the first emigration. The Big Company as it was called consisted of about 1,353 persons and was equipped with 566 wagons. The Leany family belonged to the 100 of which Edward Hunter was captain. On the 25th of September 1847 they arrived at the old fort in Salt Lake Valley, where the work of making "the desert blossom as a rose" began. Isaac being industrious, always found work to do. When his work was done, he would work for someone else. If they couldn't pay him money, he would work for anything. He thus obtained many useful articles before he left "the states" for the west. Some of them he brought across the plains among which was a number of tools, a large soap kettle and hand mill. Very soon after grandfather arrived in Salt Lake Valley he made a spinning wheel and loom, the first one made in Utah, on which grandmother spun and wove the first piece of woolen cloth made in Utah.

During the early days, when the Saints were threat-

ened with the army, grandfather had another dream which was fulfilled. Again it was the sign of an enemy a large snake coiled and menacing the valley of Salt Lake. We see the fulfillment of this dream in Johnston's army, which was a menace to the city until the outbreak of the Civil War. In the fall of 1873 grandfather had been confined to

his bed for sometime, but on October 30th was feeling better, and calling his oldest son to his bed side spoke to him something like this. "It was a cold night last night was it not?"

"Yes, father," said George, "there was a heavy frost."

"My son do you know it was just 35 years ago today since I was shot at Haun's Mill? My son, I am going to die today."

"No, father," answered George, "you are better today."

"Yes, I know," he answered, "but I am going to die tonight. My mission on earth is filled. I wouldn't turn my hand over to live another 24 hours except for what good I might do for others. Now I will tell you how I want to be buried. Want a plain board casket, you may stain it if you wish, but make it plain. I want no hearse, my own team and wagon will suit me better."

All this was said as if he was planning a vacation. His life had been such that he could anticipate with joy the meeting of his Creator. That night he died, a noble man, a prince of the house of Israel.

Source: <https://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/ILEany.html>