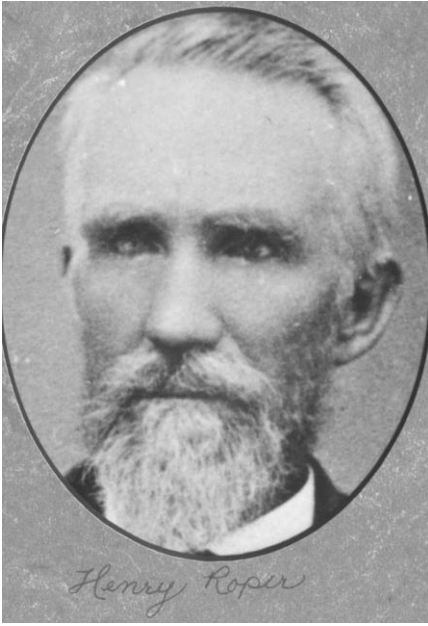


## Biography of Henry Roper



Henry Roper was born December 20, 1822 in Sheffield, Yorkshire, England. He was the second son of Abel and Sarah Mosley Roper. His older brother was Joshua. His younger sisters were Hannah, and Lydia and a younger brother, William all born in Sheffield. Sometime after William's birth, 1831 and before Mary was born about 1833 Abel moved his family to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the United States. Here Mary, Sarah Grace and Edwin were all born. Henry would have been nine or ten years old at the time his father brought the family to America.

Abel Roper, the father, died 17 November 1837 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and is buried there. Sometime later the mother took her family back to Sheffield, England. Henry would have been in his teens at that time.

One history of Henry states that he was fifteen years old, when he joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Baptismal records state that he was baptized on 9 Jul 1843 the same year that he was married.

Henry and Mary Ann Grayson, a trim refined English girl with brown eyes and brown hair, were married October 24, 1843. They were married at the Lee Croft Chapel, Sheffield, Yorkshire, England. She had

joined the church July 28, 1843.

In 1851, he was made president of the Sheffield conference which position he held until 1854. According to the ship's log Immigrants from England, Henry, Mary Ann, their two living children Harry and Alvin set sail 4 April 1854. They sailed on the ship Germanicus. Before coming to America, six children had been born to them in England. Their names were Wilford 1844, Harry 1846, John 1849, Frederick 1850, Lizzie 1851, and Alvin 1853. A stillborn twin was born three days later.

Their ship landed in New Orleans June 4, 1854. They had been on the ocean ten weeks. Their ship having been "becalmed" in the Gulf of Mexico for six weeks. They ran out of food and water. The legend goes that they found the Gulf Stream and secured fresh water. They also caught a large sea turtle, which they used for food. From New Orleans, they went by boat to St. Louis and from there to Alton, Illinois.

In Sheffield, Henry had learned the art of making cutlery. In Alton, he used the same knowledge and worked at hardening files. It is said that he made possible the success of the reaper for cutting grain through his knowledge of hardening metal used for the knives.

While in Alton he presided over that branch of the church. It was here three more children were born to them, Frank, 9 September 1855 and died 25 Dec 1855, Laura, 5 May, 1857 and died 16 August, 1857, Willie, 21 July, 1858 and died 31 July 1858.

In 1859, they came to Salt Lake City. Henry drove a team for a freighting company, and their wagon was loaded with stoves. At Red Butte along the Platte River, another daughter was born to them September 23, 1859. They "laid" over one day and a Danish woman served as midwife. This child they named Kate Platte.

In Salt Lake City, Utah, Henry worked with James Wells at the trade he had learned in England and also as a blacksmith. James Wells was the husband of his sister, Hannah Roper Wells. In Salt Lake City, April 13, 1862 another daughter was born to them. This one they named Nellie Grayson.

Henry had a friend, Thomas Memmott, who had located at Scipio, Millard County, Utah. It was felt that there was no more room for settlers in Scipio, as the water supply would not support more than twenty families. Henry and Thomas Memmott decided to locate in Deseret, which was a new settlement on the Sevier River. Henry had great faith in Deseret because of the river there. Their home in Deseret was a one-room log cabin.

According to the Oak City Ward Records, Henry was ordained a Priest, 15 February 1846. He was ordained to the office of an Elder 31 March 1849 by Crandall Dunn and J. N. Long and to the office of a Seventy, 21 January 1860, by John H. Long. Francis Marion Lyman ordained him to the office of High Priest on 10 March 1901.

Soon after they moved there, there was Indian trouble. The people were asked to move to other settlements or build a fort. They decided to build the fort, and this was made of mud and straw mixed together.

According to Milestones of Millard this was made by plowing a trench, turning water into it and throwing in straw from the plentiful wheat crop that year. Nellie and Kate helped mix the mud by tromping in this mixture along with other men, women and children. This was something all could do, as small children carried water or mixed mud and straw. The fort was completed in eighteen days. They had a celebration in it, and the Juvenile choir came over from Fillmore to sing.

The people suffered a great many hardships in Deseret. Nearly every spring after their crops were planted and growing, the dam would go out in the river and their crops would dry up. The town was moved six miles up the river.

Henry wrote the following:  
Deseret will be something yet  
Don't be afraid she's sinking  
There's water enough to keep her afloat  
And salt to keep her from stinking.

Later he wrote:  
We've wanted much of Deseret  
Alas she's proved a sham  
There's too much salt, the waters gone,  
The place is not worth a dam.

During these years, their main food was boiled fish (suckers), carrots, onions, corn, or bran bread. Most of them had cows to furnish milk. He had said that many a time, he went to work on the dam with only a carrot in his pocket for lunch. His wife Mary Ann often told of a time when the County Assessor came and she could not go to the door because her only dress had been washed and was hanging out to dry.

In Deseret, Henry was superintendent of the Sunday School. He was also Postmaster after Thomas Memmott moved back to Scipio. He was head of the first public library in Utah.

Two more children were born to them in Deseret. Charlie was born October 1, 1865, and Abel Mosley, February 22, 1868. This completed their family of 14 children. Six lived to marry and raise families.

In 1868, Deseret was abandoned and the family moved up to Oak Creek, now called Oak City. It was late one evening in August when they reached the town site of Oak Creek and stopped on what they thought was the lot they had drawn. They found that the lot belonged to John Lovell, so they drove on to the next lot, which they later secured and made their home.

The deed for the Henry Roper lot states that he had Lot I Block 3 and Lot 4 Block 7 Plat A. Lot one Block 3 was on the main street of town just a block south of where the public buildings were erected. There was also a store built just north of them on the same block.



Henry Roper blacksmith  
shop built about 1875-  
always had pigeons in the  
pigeon house right of picture.

Their first house was a dugout, a cellar walled up with rocks and a dirt floor and a lean-to for a kitchen. The dirt taken out was made into adobes, which they used to build a dirt roof. Later a room 14' by 16' was built just south of the dugout. It was built of adobes made from the dirt taken out of the dugout. Not one nail was used. Pegs were made by hand to put it together with. The floor was the ground and the roof was covered with bark and dirt. There was a door on the east and one on the west, with two small windows on the east. A fireplace was on the south side for warmth and for cooking. This also served as the first post office with Henry as the postmaster.

Henry set up a blacksmith shop where he spent a lot of his time. His wife spent a great deal of her time among the sick, as she was an experienced midwife.

He became the first Postmaster of Oak Creek and was Postmaster of Oak City for thirty years. Mail came from Fillmore once a

week. The mail later came from Leamington twice a week. In 1898, when they talked of a daily mail, he refused to act any longer.

He led the choir and was Superintendent of the Sunday School four years. Henry was in the Quorum of Seventies as one of the presidents when that quorum was organized in 1897. He was made a High Priest 25 March 1901.

The second year at Oak Creek times were very hard, and he walked to Salt Lake City to find work. He worked for some time with his brother-in-law, Jim Wells.

Henry and his sons bought land at Fool Creek Flat. The book Echoes of Sage and Cedar states, "Henry's sons, Harry, Abel, Alvin and Charles Sr. all inherited land from their father. Charles traded his Oak City property to Abel for his Fool Creek property. Alvin's son, Bert, took over Alvin's Fool Creek property and later traded it to Joseph T. Finlinson for his house and lot in Oak City.

Henry was one of the first men to buy in with others on a threshing machine. He was instrumental when the Oak Creek Canal and Ditch Company was organized. He became Director and President of it.

He was a very loud and fluent speaker. He believed in letting others hear what he had to say and was the orator on 4th of July programs for many years.

Henry loved beautiful horses and loved to care for his flock of chickens and many pigeons. He had a large post in the center of the yard and the pigeon house was built on top, facing in all directions. He told his grandchildren they could have some if they could catch them. He also told them to put salt on the pigeon's tail they could be caught. He even provided the salt. He had many laughs at the grandchildren expense.

His children remember that when it was time for them to come home from play, their father would always put his little fingers in the corners of his mouth and whistle. The children came running.

His grandchildren will never forget him because he always gave them a nickel on their birthdays until they were ten years of age. He also reserved the right to give them a little birthday paddling along with the nickel, which was somewhat of an ordeal with the more shy children. His wife, Mary Ann Roper, died March 7, 1897 in Oak City, Utah at the age of 73. Henry died November 10, 1906 in Oak City, Utah at the age of 84. He is buried in the Oak City Cemetery

Nellie, at her home in San Juan County, on November 10, 1906, was ready to eat breakfast. Suddenly she pushed her plate aside and said, "Father just passed away." Sure enough, when the mail came, it had happened just as she said.

The following is the diary of Henry Roper, which he kept in shorthand. We do not know who transcribed it nor what year in which it was transcribed. The person who transcribed it states:

"I have read every page carefully and find that half is all about an ocean voyage. Each note tells of the wind being brisk, or a slight breeze, or have to "lay to", for a time. Liverpool is the only proper name I can make out.

"The other half seems to be in U.S. The names mentioned are New Orleans, Mississippi, Arkansas River, Illinois. The name of P. P. Pratt is mentioned. He speaks of meetings and of some deaths.

"I can't make out much, but can read enough of each day to give the sense above written. I have examined every date and the following notes are to prove that they are all at the mission in England.

"The general trend of each one is about the same. The death of the child is about the only variation. A meeting in which it is proposed and seconded that the monthly fast be devoted to paying the debts of the conference. Each date is a memoranda of a meeting. Mentions a number of names in shorthand and says, 'the saints rejoiced,' etc."

In one meeting the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy was read.

We met in general council and received instruction on the important revelation of marriage.

I spoke this morning. We had a good meeting at which Elder Williams (?) Also spoke.

This morning we were favored with the presence of Elder Long who was passing thru from Liverpool.

This morning Elder Southerlate spoke on taking time to worship.

This morning we had appointed as a day of fasting and prayer for the blessing of God on our labors.

This morning I opened the meeting. The place was crowded.

Elder Trelelain (?) Spoke by the power of the spirit.

June 11, 1852

Today at a quarter to 2 our daughter Lizzie died. We firmly believe we will meet her on the morning of the first resurrection. We laid her in the same grave with her three brothers, to sleep until the angels shall summon the saints to arise.

This morning we were favored with the presence of Elder Brammell(?).

This morning Elder Thomas will speak to us. In the afternoon we will have Elder Scofield. Testimonies were borne.

Today was our conference. We had a good attendance.

Sunday Oct. 3, 1852

This morning after I had opened the meeting Elder Garfield was called upon to address the Saints.

This morning I opened the meeting and called upon Elder Hobron who rose and spoke very well. In the afternoon Brother Williams opened the meeting. Testimonies were borne.

Today for the first time in my life I attended, at the town hall to get evidence on an assault, which took place at our shop on the 15th. I never had a job I disliked worse. I wish it was over.

This morning I took a very pleasant walk with Elder Long. I enjoyed it very much. In the afternoon we had a good meeting.

This morning Elder Robins rose to speak and commenced by reading a portion from the book of Doctrine & Covenants. In the afternoon he spoke on the restoration of the gospel.

This morning I called on Henry Fowlo(?) to speak. We had a good meeting. The Spirit of God was with us.

This morning Elder Robbins read from the gospel of John.

This morning Brother Thompson opened the meeting.

This morning meeting was opened late owing to the very cold weather.

This morning Elder Robinson spoke

This morning I opened meeting. We had Elder Teni(?) Richards

This morning my wife was very ill so I stayed at home. In the afternoon we had a good meeting.

Today was fast day etc.

This morning called on Elder Garfield to speak. He talked on the first principles of the gospel.

Tonight we were favored with the presence of Elder Lorenzo Snow from the valley of Great Salt Lake. We had a goodly company of saints present.

This morning was our conference and we were favored with the presence of Franklin D. Richards.

This evening I had the pleasure of baptizing Sister Johnsen.

This morning Elder Wilkes spoke.

Transcriber: "I have gone carefully through every entry and have written enough to show the substance of them all."

The second diary was also in shorthand and transcribed. Transcriber, "This book is also about the mission in England. Liverpool is mentioned."

This morning we were favored with elders from Liverpool.

Today we held conference.

Today Elder C? Made some sincere remarks, intending to reprove some who were acting very cold.

This morning I had to open meeting.

This morning my wife and son Alvin, took their departure for (?) where she intends to bathe in the salt water for the benefit of her health.

Today we had Elders Jermy & Thurston from Lancashire.

This morning Elder Garfield spoke.

This morning we were favored by having Elder Margetts who has just returned from Italy.

Tuesday 26 This morning my wife arrived home improved in her health.

At our council meeting it was agreed to have Sunday School under direction of myself and Brother Williams.

Today we had a discourse by Elder Boyntin (?).

This morning my wife came to my shop to inform me that my mother was much worse & I must go up.

Tues. 20 About 4 o'clock today my mother died, her spirit going home to God.

This morning we met an elder from my brother-in-law, Joseph Thomson.

Elder James Carrigan arrived tonight from the valley of Great Salt Lake. He was first president of Sheffield Conference.

Today I received a letter from my Brother and Sister Thompson in Salt Lake. They are getting along in fine style. They are in possession of a cow and pigs. They have their house built. They promise to help us all they can to emigrate.

This morning it was very cold in our rooms. We had no fire.

Very cold at school this morning. No fires.

Transcriber: (The lines about emigrating give the impression he had never left England for the U.S.)

This morning it was so cold we sent the children home. We had no fires.

This morning we had a good meeting. There was a fire and we were comfortable.

This morning we had the company of Elder Rowen who made some very appropriate remarks to both teaches and scholars.

This morning there was held my farewell. There were not less than 240 there. A collection was taken up. My testimonial was presented by Elder Park in a brief speech.

Feb. 9, 1851

This morning I opened the meeting. Brother James Otley talked to us. He spoke strongly about being saints, not only in name but in deed.

In the afternoon Brother John Memmott opened the meeting and in a very neat speech urged the Saints to be truly noble, aspire to great things, which is their privilege.

Feb 14 Called on Pres. Smith to talk, who addressed us on the words of the Savior and His disciples. A most choice meeting. Privileged to have the gospel in its purity.

March 3 This was the best meeting I have had the pleasure of opening. The spirit of God was truly there. It was prolonged 8 (?) Hours.

March 9 In the morning I opened the meeting and called upon Elder Obenson who commenced by referring to the Lord's Prayer.

In the afternoon I called on Brother James Sanderson. This was his first attempt since his ordination to office.

March 16 Today being appointed as a day of fasting and prayer, in the morning we had a good number of saints present. I opened the meeting and then called upon Elder John Stevenson to speak. This was his first attempt as a preacher.

Next I called on Henry Folow to speak, who read a portion of the Book of Mormon.

March 23 In the morning after prayer, I rose to speak. I referred to Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians.

In afternoon Brother Rarner spoke, his first attempt after elevation to office of Priest.

March 30 This morning before going to meeting I attended to duties of baptizing two sisters, Sarah and Eliza Bathen (?)

April 1 I called on Brother Iler (?) Who spoke on the humbleness and noble mindedness of Joseph Smith in going forth at the risk of his life to proclaim the Church of God.

April 12 This morning I opened the meeting. Elder Saby (?) being present. Elder Robins rose to speak.

Elder Daly expressed his joy at being present with us. He said embracing the gospel brought peace, comfort and joy.

April 20 This morning I opened the meeting and read the 24th Chapter of Luke from which I made some remarks. In the afternoon we had a pretty good meeting.

April 27 I opened the meeting and Brother Long rose to address us. He spoke of (the) negligence of people not attending the morning meeting. He referred to Doctrine & Covenants.

April 28 This afternoon I baptized Brother Ordons (?) who in council meeting confessed his folly. I was congratulated on his reinstallment in (the) church.

May 4 This morning we had a very slack attendance. I opened meeting and made a few remarks, urging those present to have diligence and perseverance.

May 17 In the morning I called upon Brother Itle to speak. Elder Robins also spoke. In afternnon we had Elder Lem (?) Richards.

May 18 This morning meeting opened by Brother Otley. Called on Elder Blasy (?) to speak.

May 25 This morning I had a very small congregation present. Elder Long was there and I proposed that he speak in the evening. He quoted from the Doctrine & Covenants, said that it would (be) beneficial those who read it.

June 8 Ward Conference.

June 10 I opened meeting and called upon Bro. Johnson to speak, his first attempt. He spoke on tithing. Testimonies.

June 15 This morning I opened meeting, Brother Robins being present. In the afternoon I opened with some remarks, then Elder Robins spoke about what the human family must do to obtain a full salvation.

June 22 Elder Long made some remarks. Urged the saints to get to morning meeting. He read 12th Chapter of Book of Nephi.

June 28 Elder Memmot (?) spoke of the general apostasy. Testimonies were borne.

July 6 I opened. Elder Irons (?) spoke and expressed his pleasure at meeting with the saints. He spoke of the Prophet Joseph Smith & exhorted the saints to be faithful.

July 7 Tonight open air meeting. I commenced to speak & did not get far before I was stopped by someone in the congregation. There was a spirit of confusion.

July 13

July 20 This morning before going to the room, I attended to baptism of John Newby family. I have reason to think they will make good saints.

July 27 This morning after the meeting had been opened I rose to speak. I took my text from last Chapter of Revelation.

Aug 13 This morning after I had opened meeting Elder (?) to speak. His text was 24 Chapter of Matthew.

Aug 17 This morning I had the pleasure of baptizing Brother Stevenson.