Tunis Rappleye

Grandfather of Martha Rappleye Reynolds for Camp Orem, Utah DUP
Typed by Kathleen Woolf 2 Oct. 2002

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The very beginning of the great design of God’s will concerning the establishment of his “Marvelous Work and A Wonder” commenced with a continuous movement westward.

Tunis Rappleye, son of John Ransom Rappleye and Margaret Tillier, born 2 Feb. 1887 in Ovid, Seneca Co., New York, was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 20 Nov. 1832 just 2 years after the organization of the Church 6 April 1830. He was the only member of his family, whose roots were first planted in New Netherlands, to join the new church. It seems his forbears had the westward movement in their blood. The family name was written in American History in 1623 at DeRapalje, the family having been driven from France through religious persecution over into Holland, where they remained long enough to mix with the Dutch blood. The immediate western trek of the family began from Long Island over into New Jersey, thence up the Hudson River and westward to Seneca Co. In New York.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was commanded through revelation to go to Kirtland, Ohio, where the Church functioned long enough to build a House of the Lord known as the Kirtland Temple. Tunis Rappleye took part in the building of this first temple. It is recorded in the Prophet Joseph’s History of the Church that seventy men were called by the Prophet to receive a special blessing for the faithful performance of work assigned them on this building and Tunis Rappleye was among that group of men. (History of the Church, Vol. 2 pg 205-6. Shortly before this cherished blessing was given, Tunis was married to Louisa Elizabeth Cutler by the Prophet Joseph Smith, (Ibid pg , 306)

The Saints remained in Kirtland vicinity long enough to witness the completion of the dedication of the Temple, 27 March 1836, and to receive the rich fruits of their labors in the visitation of the Savior of the world, Moses, Elijah, Elias and other heavenly messengers, each delivering the keys of authority held by them in ancient days to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Hundreds of the Saints also received a “Pentecostal baptism in the fire of the Holy Spirit”. Tunis and his wife were there to partake of this marvelous joy and be prepared with the saints for the great events to follow. The pointing finger of the Lord directed the Saints onward in the westward call to Missouri. Here we find Tunis and wife, parents of their first child, born 21 Dec 1936 at Crooked River, Missouri.

At Independence, Jackson Co., Missouri, the City of Zion, the new Jerusalem was to be built. Though this was not accomplished at this time, for the saints were driven from Missouri, going eastward for a little season to rest and father strength at Nauvoo, preparatory for the great and final move westward. Read Doc. & Cov. 101:16-20, wherein the Lord said “And behold there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed, neither shall there be any
other place appointed than that which I have appointed for the work of the gathering of my Saints. Seemingly Tunis & family did not reside in Nauvoo for we have record of 2 children being born in Macedonia, Hancock, Ill. They lived in this locality until the Nauvoo Temple was built. After Martydom of Joseph and Hyrum, the work on the Temple was feverishly executed so that the purpose of its existence might not be lost to the Saints. It was dedicated and many of the Saints received their endowments & sealings therein. Alpheus Cutler and family were among the favored lot. The wife of Tunis Rappleye, Louisa Elizabeth Cutler was a daughter of Alpheus Cutler and Louis Lathrop. She, with her father’s family, received her endowments 29 Dec. 1845, but Tunis was not thus favored. Later he was endowed in the Endowment House in Salt Lake and his wife sealed to him 3 June 1856.

The membership of the Church grew rapidly & Nauvoo the Beautiful prospered. Then came the cruel expulsion of the Saints from Nauvoo. Under the Leadership of Brigham Young, the great westward trek went across the plains to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, arriving 24 July 1847. In August of that year we meet him in company of Shadrach Roundy on a return trip to Winter Quarters. A letter of instruction sent to them by messenger from Pres. Young was recorded in Daily History, 16 Aug. 1847, verifies this fact. Tunis made several trips back & forth on this same mission of assisting immigrants to the valley. His valiant wife remained at Council Bluffs, Iowa with her little brook of children giving birth to 3 more, a pair of twins and one other son, while her husband was going back and forth. She came toi Utah in 1853 and gave her life in the birth of another son.

Tunis, the colonizer & frontiersman, often needed comfort & strength in his arduous labors. In a Patriarchal Blessing, he was told he had been “raised up as a savior to his family”, the branches of which spread from Canada to Arizona & from New York to Cal. In his life, the great design of God in establishing His church in the tops of the mountains may be traced as one of the weavers, who worked as long as life lasted. The great design, which was foretold, even by the ancient prophets, is only partly completed in this last & great westward call.

Tunis Rappleye died 25 Dec. 1883 at Kanosh, Millard, Utah. His descendants, numbering approximately one thousand are preparing to meet in the company of over 5,000 ancestors whose temple work he started in St. George as early as 1878.