

John Riggs Murdock
Fourth great grandfather

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Hello! My name is Gabriel Isaias Ogburn-Patino and for my essay I chose my fourth great grandfather: John Riggs Murdock. I chose John Riggs Murdock because he had a very interesting life in the Utah colonies. First, I will talk about things that happened in his childhood life. Next I will describe his jobs, marriage, family, and death. Lastly, I will explain why it is important to learn about our ancestors.

John was born in Ohio on September 13, 1826. He is my fourth great grandfather on my father's side. His father was a farmer, when he was four years old his mother died and his father became a missionary. After that, they moved to Missouri, Illinois, and finally to Iowa because they were looking for a place to build a town. When he was twelve, he drove one hundred head of cattle to their new home. When he was seventeen, he was run over by a team or herd (I don't know) of runaway horses and barely survived. He worked on a farm for Joseph Smith and when they left Nauvoo, Illinois, he lived with the Lott family and met his first wife.

He married Almira Lott as his first wife and had ten children. During this time, he worked for the Mormon 'down and back' system. This is where the church brought Mormon immigrants from the east to the west. Murdock holds the record for leading the most wagon trains west. He also rode for the Pony Express. He was a well-respected leader in the community and was the mayor of Lehi in 1861- 1863. As a leader in the church, he was sent to be the presiding bishop in Beaver and was the first president of the Beaver Stake. Murdock helped found the secondary school in Beaver which was called Murdock Academy. This functioned as an arm of Brigham Young Academy which later became BYU. He was also on the boundaries committee for the Utah State Constitutional Convention in 1895. He later married two other wives in the common practice of polygamy at that time. His other wives were named Mary Ellen Wolfenden and May Bain. Mary Ellen had eight children and May had one child. John Riggs Murdock was a hard working, highly respected man who got along with both people and animals. He died at the age of 87 and is buried in Beaver, Utah.

I enjoyed hearing all of the great stories about Murdock. I liked it because I had not seen my grandfather's older sister (the person who told me the stories) in a long time. My great aunt Janet Barr even picked him out for me. She asked what kind of books I like and I told her I liked adventures. John Murdock was definitely adventurous. It is important to learn about our ancestors because it is important and fun to learn about our family heritage. I was excited and surprised to learn about his history.