

JOHN LEWIS DUNYON

Born: 1810 Newburyport, Massachusetts
 Age: 46
 Rescuer



John was born in a quiet little fishing village in Massachusetts to John and Mary Kendall Dunyon. At the age of seventeen, he went to work on a fishing vessel but after a few years at sea, John chose to become a doctor. He saved his money so he could have enough to attend medical school. John received his degree and between 1835 and 1849 he practiced as a doctor in Springfield, Illinois, as well as in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

In 1834 John married Sarah Ann Reeves and they became the parents of seven children. Two of their young sons drowned in the Mississippi River on May 16, 1847. Another child died as a result of burns and another died at age two. The twins, Darwin and Dora, and son, Newton, lived to maturity.

With news of gold in California, John decided to go west in 1849, but he never made it past Salt Lake City as he became converted to Mormonism while there. He returned to Ohio for his wife and children, but Sarah was very prejudiced against Mormons and refused to return with him. John returned to Utah with his three children, but without Sarah.

In 1853 John married Ann Kempton Brown and they became the parents of ten children, five of whom died in infancy, including twin boys who died at birth. John was no stranger to heartache, losing nine of his seventeen children to death. One of these deaths was in October 1856, when John Lewis Dunyon, Jr., John and Amy's first child, died at the age of 16 months. Shortly after this, John answered Brigham Young's request to go out and assist the suffering Saints still on the plains. John was a practicing physician and medical advisor to Brigham Young. In 1853-54 he served in the Green River mission as a surgeon at Ft. Supply. He would now serve in this capacity for many new immigrants, assisting them in their entrance into their promised land.

John Dunyon owned two city blocks with homes on each in Salt Lake City, but decided to move and change his profession as there was so much distrust and prejudice toward doctors by some of the Saints. One such person was a certain John Ennis of Draper who constantly accused John of not having enough faith, or he wouldn't be a doctor. John's grandson wrote of this: "Grandfather did not want to retaliate but rather win the good favor of Brother Ennis. He was the possessor of an army coat which was very precious to him. He knew that Brother Ennis admired the coat, so one night Grandfather went to the Ennis home and without seeing or telling anyone, left the coat. This developed into a lasting friendship between the two men." John's good character was also evidenced by upholding a contract in which the amount of 30 cents was mistakenly written as 3 dollars. This contract caused John to lose his property in the city in order to pay the higher price.

John moved his family to property near Point of the Mountain which today contains part of the Utah State Prison. It was for this property that he had traded one of his Salt Lake homes. This was the Porter Rockwell Ranch, or Halfway Station, where stages stopped on their way through the territory or on to Southern California. John and Ann ran the Halfway Station as an inn with the help of their children and Ann's mother, Abby C. Calwalader Brown. A large sign advertised the inn: "Our Mountain Home – Meals at all hours by J. L. Dunyon." Besides running the inn, the Dunyon's homesteaded enough land to total 640 acres. When John discovered a hot springs and the medical benefits it produced, he hoped he would be able to resume his medical career and bring in some more income.

(John Dunyon - page 2)

John spent considerable time and money in ranching and mining, but without success. The railroad went through to Provo in 1877 and took away much of his business. This same year, John's wife lay seriously ill in her bed for almost a year and finally died of typhoid fever on June 22, 1877. John's biography states that "on that hot June day, a sorrow stricken family brought her remains for twenty miles over a dusty road in a white-top light spring wagon to the [Salt Lake] city cemetery."

Dr. John Dunyon died less than two years later on April 18, 1879, at the age of 68. Having worked so diligently, and yet been so unsuccessful in his business ventures, at the time of his death "the family property consisted of land near the Point of the Mountain, a gray mare, one cow, and a bay stallion." His medical practice had not been especially lucrative, either. "His policy as a doctor was: 'If I make you well you pay for my services – if I don't you only pay for the medicine.'" One young English girl who arrived in the Valley in very feeble health was cared for only a few weeks by Dr. Dunyon before she died. In the family Bible, John wrote her genealogical and other brief information and this comment: "Previous to her death she requested to be sealed to me and hence will bear my name and be registered among my family." Her name was Elizabeth Charlotte Liddiard.

John was an officer of the Utah Militia when Johnston's army attempted to enter the Valley in 1857-58. He was also a member of the first City Council of Salt Lake and in this capacity developed a close friendship with Daniel H. Wells. He wrote hundreds of "recipes" (prescriptions) during his lifetime. These were written in two large books and handed down to Joy W. Dunyon. The following are two of those recipes:

Elixir of Life: 1 lb. gum myrrh, ½ lb. aloes, ¼ lb. saffron, ½ lb. hops, ½ lb. rhubarb, ½ lb. camomile, 2 oz. cayenne, 4 oz. cinnamon, 4 oz. cloves, 1 lb., anise seed. Add enough water to cover well, strain, boil and add water so that there will be 5 or 6 gallons in all. Take lb. each of the following: either poplar, boneset, jimson or balmory. Boil in water, strain and boil down so as to make in all 8 gallons, then add sugar, boil it with the bitter decoction and skim, then add it to the former mixture, flavor with essence of wintergreen and bottle. Dose 1 tbs. six times a day.

Liver and Dyspepsia Bitters: 1 oz. bloodroot, 1 oz. May apple, 1 oz. rhubarb, 2 oz. senna, 2 oz. bitterroot, 1 oz. jalap. Make 4 quarts tincture. Now take ragweed, 4 oz., peach leaves, 8 oz., 8 oz., rei root, 4 oz. columbo. Make 2 gallons. Add essence of wintergreen, sugar and spices.

Source: "Doctor John," *Our Pioneer Heritage*, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Vol. 2, pgs. 93-96.



Ann Kempton Brown Dunyon, (wife)