

Historical Sketch of James Stewart
Probably written by Elmira Mower date unknown
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On one of the side streets of Fairview stands an old adobe, two story house with a trap door leading to a "cellar" beneath. This is the old house of James Stewart, where he reared his family of twelve children. It was from here that the body of his faithful wife, the mother of these children, was taken to it's final resting place on September 8, 1888, leaving an awful emptiness in his heart, as well as his home. It wasn't the luxurious home he had dreamed of providing for his sweetheart wife, but it held peace, and love, music - James was a musician - and laughter. . Together they had built and planted until it was a lovely homo, surrounded by trees - fruit as well as shade trees. Precious winter apples, crabs - both sour and the bittersweet - were bounties ho loved to share with his children, now married, but still living near the home nest. Here, too, was relief from the persecution that had dogged his boyhood days in Missouri and Illinois. Here, too, was at last relief from fear of the savage Indians.

James was born in Green County, Indiana, the 14th of February 1827 to Nathaniel and Darcas Tabitha (Huey) Stewart. His parents were early converts to the Church, having been baptized May 1, 1832, and James in February 1835 - when he was eight years of age. Immediately, persecution began, and continued through the years ahead as they

moved with the body of the Church in Missouri and on into Illinois where the beautiful city of Nauvoo was built. Here according to tradition, he lived for a while in the home of Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch, following the death of his mother. The dark grief that struck the Saints with the news of the martyrdom was shared by James, possibly ". even more so, because of partaking of their kind hospitality.

He experienced, with others, the hardships of the exodus from Nauvoo and was one of the group of men and boys comprising the Mormon Battalion. Nineteen year old

James of Company “D”, captained by Nelson Higgins, was one of a group of 549 souls, who, on the sixteenth of July 1846, left Winter Quarters, from there to march to Fort Leavenworth, where they were outfitted and issued supplies. Then began their heroic march across the burning plains and rugged mountains of New Mexico to Southern California - a distance of over 2,000 miles. The hardships of building roads over the rugged terrain, digging wells, etc., coupled with short rations and lack of water, caused much sickness and some deaths. Many were disabled before they reached Santa Fe and prevented them from proceeding further. James was among the disabled detachment who, with most of the women of the Battalion, were placed under the command of Captain James Brown and ordered to Pueblo on the headwaters of the Arkansas River, while their comrades, including four women, who accompanied their husbands, pushed on to the Pacific coast. The sick detachment reached the valley of Great Salt Lake on the 29th of July 1847, five days after President Brigham Young and his group.

In one scant month, much was accomplished in clearing ground making ditches, construction of a fort, etc., before the first group among whom were many Battalion members - were ready to make the return journey. James Stewart was in the second ten with Shadrach Roundy as captain. The return journey was accomplished in a little over nine weeks and was comparatively uneventful. True, their supplies of food gave out and they had to subsist for several weeks on dried buffalo meat, but after some of the hardships of the Battalion, one could not complain with such minor problems.

Fort Utah (Provo), the first settlement outside the Salt Lake Valley, was the place young James first called home, upon his return West in 1850. This little community of 40 families had been established early in March of 1849 in response to the plea from Ute leaders to have “Colonists go with them and teach them to farm in their valleys to the southward.”

Pioneering is easier with someone to cheer and encourage one - someone to love - and so James asked blue-eyed Elizabeth Hoopes, the youngest daughter of Johnathan and Rebecca (Watts) Hoopes, to share his heart and help him build a home. They were

married the 23rd of July 1852 and received their endowment eight days later. (31 of July 1852. On the 27th of April of the following year their first son, James William, came to bless their union and cement it further with Edmond Warner the 4th of July 1854, Frances Marion the 2nd of February 1856 and my grandmother, Emily Rebecca, the 12th of October 1857 before they moved again – this time to North Bend – now Fairview.

It is well one does not know the trials the future holds. How many could one avert by obeying council? Even in the face of repeated warnings it seems one optimistically procrastinates the preparation those warnings should impel. Though repeatedly warned to keep a years supply of food on hand, many of the saints failed to obey council and when the famine, which resulted from a partial crop failure caused by a cricket infestation coupled with a year of severe draught, struck the Territory, many were poorly prepared. The winter that followed - one of the severest ever known in Utah - was one to test a person's preparedness. During the early months of 1856, the sufferings of the saints were severe. Many, were driven to the necessity of digging roots in order to eke out an existence until harvest time. We do not know how well prepared James and Elizabeth were to meet this emergency with two little babies in their home and another on the way, but all suffered. Many who had stored shared with those who hadn't- such is the way of those who would gain a crown!

The year 1847 was one of bounteous crops. However the Saints were not left without worries.. Indian troubles increased in intensity but seemed minor compared to a new fear that faced them - the ordering of United States troops to Utah to suppress a reported "rebellion." The apprehension aroused by the coming of Johnson's Army can hardly be appreciated when viewed in these years of peace and security. To James and Elizabeth, as well as to other saints who had suffered the being driven out of their homes by the mobs of Missouri and Illinois, it must have been of grave concern. President Young voiced the sentiments of the people when he said: "We have borne enough of their oppression and abuse and we will not hear any more of it. ---I am not going to permit troops here for the protection of the priests and the rabble in their efforts to drive us from

the land we possess." According he planned - should all other effort fail to keep them back - "To utterly lay waste this land---and our enemies shall find it as barren as when we came." The men were mobilized harvesting hastened and supplies were packed for a move southward. Homes were filled with straw to be touched off by sentries at a given signal and the saints were on the move. Utah was declared under Martial Law. Residents of Northern Utah were all moved south and so conditions continued through out the winter while the troops were held up in Camp Scott on Ham's Fork in Wyoming. It was not until a year later that President Young gave the order for the saints to return to their homes. Col. Thomas L. Kane, acting as mediator had eased the tension. A new governor, Governor Cummings, was installed and the troops were to pass through Salt Lake City and winter at Ceder Valley 36 miles south.

The following year (1859) James took his family and began sinking down the roots of another home this time in North Bend (now Fairview) in Sanpete. Was his move prompted by a "call" from President Young or had he moved his family south the previous year and been attracted to the beautiful valley? The answer is not known.

He came to Sanpete County as the Indians under Chief Black Hawk were on the warpath and helped to defend his family and neighbors against the hostile forces until they were subdued and peace treaty affected but not before his brother Nathaniel was killed the 12th of August 1872 just a month before the treaty was signed. Many other homes had been saddened, too, but peace was all the more appreciated when at last it was gained.

Eight more children came to bless their home in the ears following their move to Fairview, 5 girls and 3 boys, before they felt the sorrow of an empty chair. On the 12th of March 1875 their home was saddened by the loss of baby Eva Lucretia just eleven months old. Their hearts were humbled, Home was made dearer for:

Yo've got t' weep t' make it home,
yo've got t' sit and sigh
an' watch beside a loved one's bed,

and know that death is nigh;
An' in the stillness O' the night t' see death's angel come,
An' close the eyes O' her that smiled,
An' leave her sweet voice dumb.

Edgar A. Guest

Blindness made his world dark during the last two years of life, but memories and a kind companion, Christina Jensen, whom he married following the death of Elizabeth, brought cheer and peace – blessed peace – as life drew to a close. He passed away on the 18th of October 1908, at the age of eighty-one