

## JAMES GIBB

Born: about 1795 in Scotland (Died Oct. 23/24, buried in common grave at Rock Creek)

Age: 61

Willie Handcart Company

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James was a sailor from Scotland. After he and his wife, Mary Gordan, joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they were anxious to emigrate to America and be with the rest of the Saints. They left their family in Scotland and went ahead, intending to prepare a place for them in the Salt Lake Valley.

James was 67 and his wife was 52 when they joined with the Willie handcart company. It was a difficult journey. They were leaving very late in the season. By the time the Willie company reached the sixth crossing of the Sweetwater, they were out of provisions and stranded by a severe winter storm. Captain Willie and Joseph Elder left the company here to go in search of the rescue wagons they knew to be coming. After they returned, the company had to push on through a severe storm to Rock Creek, where they would meet rescuer Reddick Allred with extra wagons and provisions. This was surely the worst part of the journey for James and Mary, as it included crossing the formidable Rocky Ridge.

A fellow traveler in the Willie company, Levi Savage, wrote: "This was a severe day. The wind blew awful hard, and colde. The ascent was some five miles long, and some places, steep and covered with deep snow. We became wery, set down to rest, and some became chilled, and commenced to frieze." Possibly James Gibb was one of these. Savage continued:

Brothers Atwood; Wooderd; and myself, remained with the teams, they being perfectly loaded down with the sick, and children, so thickly stoed, I was fearful, some would smuther. About 10 or 11 oclock in the night, we came to a creek that, we did not like to attempt to cross without help, [it] being full of ice and freezing colde. Leaving Bros Atwood; and Wooderd with the teams, I started to the camp for help; I met Bro Willey coming to look for us, he turned for the camp as he could do no good aloan. I passed several on the road, and . . . after about four miles travel, I arived in Camp; but few tents were pitched, and men, women, and children sit shivering with colde around their small fires. Some time elapsed when two teams started to bring up the rear. Just before daylight they returned, bringing all with them, some badly frozen; some dying, and some dead. It was certainly heartrending to hear children crying for mothers, and mothers, crying for children. By the time I got them, as comfortably situated as circumstances could admit - which was not very comfortable, day was dawning. . . . Friday [Oct] 24th; This morning found us with thirteen corps for bereal. These were all put into one grave, some had actually frozen to death. We were obliged to remain in camp, move the tents, and people behinde the willows to shelter them from the . . . wind which blew enough to pearce us through.

James finally succumbed to death. He is buried in the common grave at Rock Creek. He was buried on his wife's 53rd birthday. Mary continued to the valley where she was sealed to James in the Endowment House on March 6, 1857.

Sources: Diary of Levi Savage; familysearch.org.