

## JANE H. JAMES

Born: 1815 England

Age: 41

Willie Handcart Company



Jane James and daughters

Jane Haynes was an infant when her mother died. Jane was raised by her grandmother. Her childhood was spent in poverty and she had no opportunity to attend school. As soon as she was old enough, she was obliged to make her own living. When she joined the Church, she felt that it was an answer to prayer. Jane married William James in 1836. They became the parents of eight children. In 1856 they were able to emigrate to Zion. The children with them were: Sarah (age 19), Emma Jane (16), Reuben (13), Mary Ann (11), Martha (9), George (6), John Parley (3 or 5), and Jane (8 months).

The James family boarded the ship *Thornton* in May 1856. Jane said: “We left our English home in the summer [May] of 1856. The journey across the Atlantic Ocean took 6 long weeks. Our little Jane sickened and died June 1, 1856, while we were on the ocean and we had to bury her there. I wanted the captain to let us keep her until we landed which wasn’t too long, but he felt that it wasn’t wise.”

Mary Ann James remembered: “We became converts to the Mormon Faith in 1854 and on May 3rd 1856 started our journey for America, to find Zion, then a wilderness, later to be known as Utah the queen of the West. The journey across the great Atlantic was made in a sailing vessel and required six long weeks. During this voyage my parents were called upon to part with their baby. Death claimed our little Jane and we were obliged to place the precious bundle in a watery grave. Mother’s heart strings were torn, but the brave little mother that she was felt not to murmur against the will of him who gave. This weary journey was ended June 17th and we certainly felt thankful for our safe deliverance. We landed at New York ... We were met at Camp Iowa by Elders from Salt Lake, with tents, handcarts and provisions, we were told that all must walk that could and pull our baggage and provisions. ... The company in which we traveled was Willie Company. ... We left camp Iowa July 15th and the first 200 miles of our journey was filled with pleasant memories.”

Jane recalled the discussion about the wisdom of continuing past the Missouri River that year. She said: “It was decided that we would start for the mountains and if the weather stayed good, and if we hurried, we could make it before it got too cold. I was all for the going on now.”

Emma James remembered the meeting where the Saints made this decision by voting, and Levi Savage voiced his opposition: “I can remember that when he finished there was a long time of silence. I was frightened. Father looked pale and sick.<sup>1</sup> I turned to Mother to see what she was thinking and all I saw was her old determined look. She was ready to go on tomorrow. There were many others like her. We really didn’t have much choice. There was no work here for us to keep ourselves through the winter, and our family had to live. ‘We must put our trust in the Lord, as we have always done,’ said Mother, and that was that.”

“July 15 our company ... headed [from Iowa City] for our outfitting station at [Florence]. It was great fun pulling empty carts and imitating the wagon drivers with a ‘gee’ and ‘haw.’ We got away ahead of the slow wagons and had to wait for them. We had plenty of time to see the country we were passing through—to run here and there and to explore this and that. There were many things to catch the eye in this strange land. ... When we started out on the trail each morning there was always something new to see. Maybe it was a bird running along the road which we chased but never did catch. There were always flowers and pretty rocks to pick. This land was so different from the one in England that it kept us interested. We were constantly being warned not to go too far away from the trail, but I can’t remember that we heeded the warning until we had one or two experiences which made us more careful. One day as we were skipping along beside the carts and singing, for we were always happy as I remember it, a group of Indians on horse back rode up and followed along with us for a while. We didn’t know the redman well enough to be too friendly, so we quieted down and stayed close to our parents. One of the Indians seemed fascinated by the contraptions being pulled along by people. Finally his curiosity got the best of him. He leaped off his horse, ran over to one of the carts which was being pulled by a woman and her daughter and gave it such a hard push that it nearly ran over them. The woman and girl screamed and got out of the shafts as fast as they could. The Indians pushed the cart for a little ways, and then, apparently satisfied, he jumped on his horse and rode off. He, with some of his friends, came back later to beg for food. We gave it to them because we were told that the Indians were our brethren and that we should treat them so. We never did have any trouble with them except that they never seemed to learn that it was stealing to take something which didn’t belong to them.

“One evening as we prepared to stop for the night, a large herd of buffalo came thundering toward us. It sounded like thunder at first, then the big black animals came straight for our carts. We were so scared that we were rooted to the ground. One of the captains, seeing what was going on, ran for the carts which were still coming in, jerked out some of the carts to make a path for the steady stream of animals and let them go through. They went past us like a train roaring along. I’m sure that but for the quick thinking of these men, many of us would have been trampled to death. The animals acted as if they were crazy the way they ran. We hoped that we wouldn’t meet such a large herd soon again. After they had gone somebody called out that the cattle had gone with them. This was our only supply of meat, so the men started out right after them.”

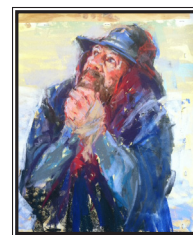
The missing cattle were never found. There were only enough oxen left for about one yoke to each wagon, but the wagons were so loaded down that they could not move them. The company was then obliged to yoke up their remaining beef cattle, milk cows, and even young heifers. With all of this, the stock was wild and could not pull the loads. The James family and others then loaded one hundred pound bags of flour on their handcarts.

Many times the family was hungry. At one time, the girls took a pair of worn-out sandals and boiled them until they made a weak broth and the leather became soft enough to eat. Jane had been especially weak at this time as she had taken as much of the load as possible off her ill husband’s shoulders. When her daughter, Sarah, suggested taking the tatters of her shoes and making soup of them, it brought a smile to her Father’s sad face, but, Sarah recorded, “Mother was a bit impatient with me and told me that I would have to eat the muddy things myself.” Sarah also wrote about the day her father died: “The day we [ascended Rocky Ridge] I’ll never forget as long as I

live. It was a bitter cold morning in October as we broke camp. As usual, there were dead to be buried before we could go on. Father and Reuben were on the burial detail. Mother, who was helping to pull the heaviest cart, had stayed behind until they could finish their sad work. After a short service, we, with my cart, ran ahead to catch the rest of the Company, and Mother and Reuben started to follow. Father collapsed and fell in the snow. He tried two or three times to get up with Mother’s help, then finally he asked her to go on, and when he felt rested he would come on later. Mother knew in her heart that he had given out, but, perhaps, she said, in a few minutes with some rest he could come on. She took the cart and hurried to follow us. She found us on the riverbank, we were too frightened and tired to cross alone. ... Mother soon had us on our way. The water was icy and soon our clothing was frozen to our bodies. Our feet were frozen numb ... Toward morning some of the Captains who had gone out to gather up the stragglers came into camp bearing the dead body of my Father, and the badly frozen body of my brother, Reuben. ... When morning came, Father’s body, along with others who had died during the night, were buried in a deep hole. ... I can see my Mother’s face as she sat looking at the partly conscious Reuben. Her eyes looked so dead that I was afraid. She didn’t sit long, however, for my Mother was never one to cry. When it was time to move out, Mother had her family ready to go. She put her invalid son in the cart with the baby and we joined the train. Our Mother was a strong woman, and she would see us through anything.”

Mary Ann also wrote of this most difficult day: “Father and my oldest brother stopped to help bury a member of our company. Mother waited with them as she was helping to draw the cart with the heaviest load. We children went on with our load until we came to a river which we could not ford. It was snowing and blowing. Father’s strength gave out. He made every possible effort to continue, but without success. Mother was placed in an awful position. Her husband unable to go farther, and her little children far ahead starving and freezing, what could she do? Father said, ‘go to the children; we will get in if we can.’ She hurried on with a prayer in her heart for father’s deliverance and our safety. She found us by the river and with her aid we waded through. Our clothing wet was soon covered with ice, and our shoes frozen on our feet. Camp was reached but we had no one to fix our tent, as father and brother were behind. We watched and listened for their coming, hoping and praying for the best. At last they were brought in but death had claimed our father.”

After the bereaved family left the burial site of their father at Rock Creek, Jane and her children moved on again with their rescuers toward the Zion of their hopes. Sarah records that the “Valley boys brought food and clothing. They hauled in wood for us, and as we gathered around the huge fire and ate the delicious morsels of food we came alive enough to thank the Lord for his mercy to us. ... I remember the rest of the journey as being terrible with the cold and snow, but we did have food and some hope of



*Keep Going*  
art by Julie Rogers

(Jane James - Page 3)

getting to Zion. ... We arrived in Salt Lake City the 9th of November having been on the plains for nearly five months. The Saints took us in and were very kind to us. Bishop Johnson of Springville sent word that he could take one family into his home for the winter, so we were sent South. We older children found work in the homes of the good people in the town, and mother moved into an unfurnished shack where she kept her younger children alive until spring with what work she could find. We stayed in Springville for a year and then moved back to Salt Lake City. Mother's children were marrying and making homes for themselves, so when Mary Ann moved to Provo she came with her. Here she spent her last years, and at the time of her death at the age of 96, August 14, 1911, she left a great posterity to revere her memory and give thanks that she had had the determination to come to Zion."<sup>2</sup>

Jane's life in Utah is summarized in *The Price We Paid*, by Andrew D. Olsen: "After four months in Springville, Sarah married Aaron Johnson. [After Aaron died, she married Samuel Carter.] Emma married Aaron's brother, Lorenzo, on the same day. When Lorenzo died 15 years later, Emma became a plural wife of John Rowley, the son of Ann Rowley, another Willie company widow.

"After a year in Springville, Jane and her younger children moved to Salt Lake City for four years. While there, Jane remarried. The marriage lasted only briefly, however, as her husband soon left both the Church and Jane, who was expecting a child at the time. When the baby was born, Jane named him William, after her husband who had died on Rocky Ridge.

"Soon Jane moved back to Utah County, where she lived the rest of her life. She died in 1911 at age 96, having spent nearly all of her 55 years in Zion as a widow. ... Emma wrote, "She left a great posterity to revere her memory and give thanks that she had had the determination to come to Zion." Mary Ann wrote, "She was one of the sturdy oaks of Utah, the like of which has made this dear old state 'blossom as the rose.'" (pg.199)

<sup>1</sup>William James was a farm laborer in England, but did not have robust health. He suffered from rheumatism. Some family histories refer to him as an "invalid."

<sup>2</sup>See painting "Mother, Carry On," by Julie Rogers, at tellmystorytoo.com.

Sources: Dangerfield, Mary Ann James, Family History, (MS2050), Church History Library; "Jane Haynes (Haines)," family history; DUP history files; "Emma James" and "Sarah James," in *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail*, by Carol Cornwall Madsen, 1997; <http://lib.byu.edu/mormonmigration>; *The Price We Paid*, by Andrew D. Olsen, 2006. See more complete James family history and paintings in *Follow Me To Zion* by Andrew Olsen and Jolene Allphin, Deseret Book, 2013.



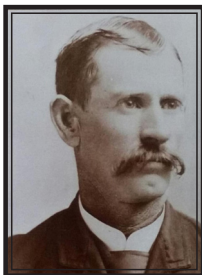
Emma James

Emma's descendants wrote: "Having worn out her shoes and going barefoot, Emma was given some hide from a dead oxen to wrap around her feet. When that worn out, she kept the worn out pieces and would toast them over the fire to eat. She continued having hard times while she raised her nine children. She crocheted, knitted, and did all kinds of beautiful handwork. She was talented in making beautiful paper flowers, especially roses. She took pride in her appearance and how she dressed. She always wore a bit of white lace at the neck of her dress and made sure her hat was placed just right. Her faith and testimony remained strong to her death."

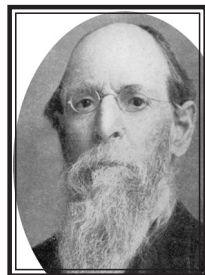
Like her sister, Sarah was also "heard saying that she would rather die than give up her testimony of the truthfulness of the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ." (Sarah's descendants)



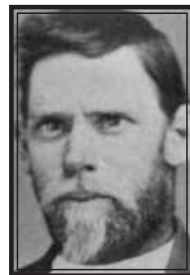
Sarah James



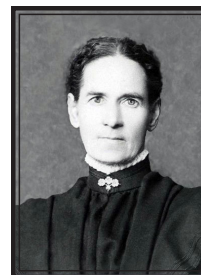
George James



Reuben James



John Parley James



Mary Ann James



Martha James