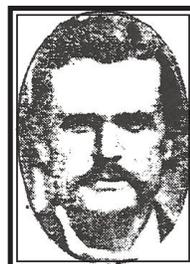


NATHAN AND WILLIAM HUNTING

Born: 24 June 1838 England

Age: 18 - Twin brothers

Rescuers



Nathan and William J. Hunting (Jr.)

Nathan Charles and William James Hunting (Jr.) were born in England, the youngest of eight children of William James (called “James”) and Elizabeth Kings Hunting. When their father was a young boy of twelve, he had rebelled at the conditions of his indentured situation, run away and joined the British Army as a drummer boy. According to family records, the night before the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, James spied Napoleon’s Army on the move and informed his commander. The British, Prussian and Dutch troops were then moved, thus saving thousands of lives. Perhaps because of this notoriety, Queen Victoria was aware of who William James Hunting (Sr.) was and referred to him as the most handsome man in the British Army. He was invited to and attended the Queen’s coronation, but Elizabeth could not go with him because of the birth of Nathan and William. Queen Victoria sent a piece of the Coronation cake home to Elizabeth.

The Hunting family joined the Church in 1841. The parents were baptized by Elder Thomas Smith. Their home in Earl’s Common then became an open house for missionaries as well as meetings of the Saints and investigators, which service continued in spite of the persecution of some of their neighbors. The twins were baptized at age nine by Elder John Smith.

The opportunity for emigration for the Hunting family came in 1853 when the Nathan’s and William’s father was 61 years old and their mother was 50. The boys were 14. The Hunting family crossed the plains with the A. Harmon Wagon Company. Due to a severe accident while crossing the plains, young William’s leg was broken and subsequently amputated. Nevertheless, when William was called to rescue the late 1856 companies three years later, he was described as being “very plucky.” Family records also describe the participation of these young rescuers during the Nov. 4, 1856, Sweetwater crossing near present day Martin’s Cove:

“The Sweetwater River ... that year was about 40 inches deep and the 18-year-old twins and other young men kept crossing the stream with their horses until over 400 people had been helped across.”

Among those ferried across the Sweetwater was 27-year-old Mary Ann Greening of the Martin Handcart Company. Years later, one of Nathan’s granddaughters married one of Mary Ann Greening’s grandsons. This grandson was also a great-grandson of Sarah Ann Bradshaw Till Jones of the Martin Company. Thus, Nathan’s rescue efforts saved some of his personal posterity.

The Hunting boys were directly under the leadership of fellow rescuer, Cyrus Wheelock, who was also the chaplain of the first rescue group. As reported by his descendants, Nathan told of Elder Wheelock waking at 2:00 a.m. in a blizzard and being shown exactly where one of the stranded handcart companies were, and though Nathan’s hands were “numb with cold ... he managed to hitch up the outfit and they started.” Nathan also told of an incident on their return to Salt Lake during a severe storm: “Bro. Wheelock knew they could not make it with the sick and weary, so he stopped and prayed, asking for help and that the course of the storm be changed. No sooner were they started again than the wind blew from their backs, cutting a path clear for them, and they went easily on into Salt Lake.”

Nathan said he “never doubted the power of revelations nor the restoration after that night,” but had “no testimony before that time.” Nathan later served as a Bishop for 9 years.

Nathan and William both remained faithful, married and had large posterities. They pioneered in numerous places including Springville, Gunnison, Vernal and Cache Valley, Utah, as well as southern Idaho. Nathan died in 1911 and William died in 1916, both near Vernal, Utah.

Sources: Files of Jolene Allphin: “James Hunting,” from Lichfield family history book, sent by Walter Lichfield, Bunkerville, Nevada; Nathan and William Hunting family histories, sent by Gayle Hunting, Garden Grove, California; *Pioneers and Prominent Men* by Frank Esshom, 1917.