

A life sketch of

James Hutton McMurray

1829-1919

and

Elizabeth Stevenson McMurray

1838-1914

Compiled by Karla Knapp Oswald – 2nd great granddaughter of
James Hutton and Elizabeth Stevenson McMurray

James Hutton McMurray was born December 24, 1829 at Hogetown, Cumberland, Pennsylvania. James was the son of Mary Hutton and John McMurray who were both born and raised in Pennsylvania.¹

Mary's family were devout members of the Quaker religion.² Mary married John on August 18, 1821, at Warrington, York, Pennsylvania.¹ When it was learned that John was not a Quaker, Mary was brought before the church leaders. After telling them she had been married by a magistrate and that her husband was not a Quaker, Mary's records were terminated and so was her affiliation with the Quaker congregation.^{2,3}



James Hutton McMurray

John and Mary lived at Silver Springs Township, Pennsylvania, where he worked as a tailor. Mary was granted membership into the Silver Spring Presbyterian Church⁴ where her son, James, was christened on April 30, 1830.¹

The John and Mary McMurray family eventually grew to include ten children, however only six grew to adulthood.¹

Sometime after James was born, John and Mary acquired property in Columbiana County, Ohio where John began to farm. Records show the family moved back and forth between Pennsylvania and Ohio for a time before settling in Ohio^{1,4} where John farmed and

raised stock. Mary managed a wayside inn or tavern.⁵ James grew up learning the skills from his father that would be needed to farm and work with cattle.

By 1836 the McMurray family became acquainted with missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is believed John and Mary were baptized prior to March 1844, but no record of the actual date has been found. Church records show that James was baptized March 1, 1844 by James Graig in Beaver County, Ohio.^{1, 6}

At this time persecutions against early church members had become vicious. Many were leaving their homes to gather with the main body of the Church in Nauvoo, Illinois. The McMurrays also made the decision to leave Ohio and move their family to Illinois. They received a letter stating they were in good standing in the Church and left for Nauvoo.⁷

James was 15 years old when his family left Ohio. As they arrived in Nauvoo they learned that the Church President and Prophet, Joseph Smith, and his brother, Hyrum, had been martyred at Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844. This was a devastating event for the McMurrays, as well as the entire population of the Church. James was left with the younger children while his parents went to view the bodies and pay their respects.⁶

Members of the Church had been exposed to harsh mob violence and persecution for months. Many had been forced from their homes, and many had lost everything. A great gathering of Saints from neighboring communities, regions throughout the eastern United States and even immigrants from Europe was taking place at Nauvoo. The McMurrays were part of this gathering.

For a short time after the death of the Prophet the Saints experienced a quiet peace from anti-groups. They busied themselves planting, harvesting, improving their properties and continuing the construction of the Nauvoo Temple.

With the death of The Prophet, there arose unrest within the membership of the Church over who should be their next leader. Church leadership at this time consisted of the members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles with the senior member being Brigham Young. Some members rebelled against this governing body and felt they should be the next president. Dissension within the Church created many concerns and problems that resulted in divisions among the membership.

James along with the other McMurray children were often told of the experience his mother had while attending a meeting to determine support for Brigham Young. Mary said that as Brigham Young rose to speak, "...he looked like Joseph Smith. Everyone at the meeting said that the mantle of Joseph had fallen on Brigham." The meeting was held August 8, 1844,

and recorded in Church History as the date and meeting Brigham Young was chosen to lead the Church.⁵ It is evident the McMurray family sustained Brigham Young as their leader and continued to follow his counsel.

The actual location where James and his family settled into the Nauvoo area is unsure, however they were presented a letter of membership dated May 24, 1845 accepting them into the Fairplay Branch at Nauvoo.⁷

The McMurrays had to have participated in the activities and busy life style the Saints knew during this Nauvoo period of time. They also must have experienced trials, sufferings and loss just as the body of the Saints did when anti-Mormon mobs formed and raged upon them once again.

As the violence grew, Church members realized another move was imminent. Work on the Temple became a priority. Its completion was of paramount importance to members whose goal was to receive the sacred ordinances performed there. Church leadership also began to organize members and make plans to conduct a great migration of the Saints across the western frontier where they believed they could practice their religious freedom and worship as they wished.

John and Mary received their temple ordinances on February 6, 1846 in the Nauvoo Temple.⁸ The next day James and Joseph received their ordinances February 7, 1847.⁹ Weeks later the members of the Church were driven out of their city and the temple was abandoned.

It was winter; many of the Saints were forced across the Mississippi River into winter camps like Winter Quarters, Nebraska, where make-shift shelters and little food kept them going until spring. Their living conditions were extremely poor; sickness and deprivation settled in and many lives were lost.

Not many details are known about the McMurrays and their part in the Nauvoo Exodus. It is known that they crossed the frozen Mississippi River and took refuge in Council Bluffs, Iowa, with thousands of other homeless Saints.⁵ Council Bluffs, also called Kaneshville, became headquarters for the church in Iowa after Winter Quarters was abandoned. Before January 1846 James and his family were living in Kaneshville, Pottawattamie, Iowa.⁶ Here the family continued to work and obtain necessary supplies and equipment needed to travel across the plains to the Great Salt Lake Valley.

James was 21 years old when he joined with his family: father (54) mother (50), Joseph (20), Matilda Jane (16), Charles K. (14) and Harriet Lucinda (11) and with other pioneers and began his trek westward. The McMurrays arrived in the Utah Territory in October 1852.¹⁰

In 1862 James was working as a teamster helping move migrations of Saints to the Great Salt Lake Valley. It was at the outpost of Florence, Nebraska that he met a young English lady whose name was Elizabeth Stevenson. James admired Elizabeth from the first moment he met her. Once they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, they were engaged.¹² James and Elizabeth were married October 19, 1862 at Salt Lake, Utah.¹



Elizabeth Stevenson McMurray

Elizabeth was born December 16, 1838 at Breaston, Derbyshire, England. She was the daughter of Mary Vickers and John Stevenson. Elizabeth was christened on December 19, 1841 at Breaston. The Stevenson family eventually grew to include 15 children.¹

In 1849 the Stevenson family became acquainted with missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1850 John and Mary applied for baptism. Mary was baptized January 20, 1850, and John was baptized February 11, 1850 at Breaston. Elizabeth became a member of the Church also and was baptized on February 4, 1852, at Breaston.^{1, 12}

Elizabeth's father was a master shoemaker and had a shop in Breaston. After he and members of his family were baptized and 'cast their lots with this abominable people' many of his customers refused to patronize him and in a short time he was forced to give up his shoe shop in town. He converted their upstairs attic into a shop, however his business continued to decline.¹³ This had to have placed a large financial burden on this large family and it appears the Stevenson children went into the workplace to help provide.

In 1851, when Elizabeth would have been 13 years old, she was working as a silk winder in English factories.¹⁴ A silk winder wound the silk from silkworm cocoons onto bobbins. Her days in the silk factory were long, hot and tedious.

From the "History of the Stevenson and Vickers Families," we learn about some of the challenges Elizabeth and her siblings faced during these years:

"Hannah and Elizabeth, the older girls of the family, worked at the silk factory in Breaston, as did also George and Amos. Joseph was often taken along to do small errands. Sometimes the girls would be sent to the factory in Derby City and sometimes in Nottingham. Regular boarding places were provided for the girls thus employed, and they would return home for the weekends only. When working at Breaston it was Fanny's job to carry their lunch to them."¹⁵

On April 23, 1862, at Liverpool, England, John and Mary Stevenson boarded the immigration vessel, 'John J. Boyd', and with eleven of their children they set sail for America. With their parents were: Elizabeth (24), Hannah (21), (Amos ((18), George Vickers (15), Fanny (14), Joseph Brigham (12), John Willard (8), Jesse Vickers (5) and Lydia (3). The family arrived at New York on June 1, 1862.¹⁶

The Stevensons then made it to Nebraska where they joined the Joseph Horne Wagon Company headed to the Great Salt Lake Valley. They were among 570 individuals and 52 wagons that began their journey from the outfitting post at Florence, Nebraska (now Omaha), on July 27, 1862. They arrived in the valley October 1, 1862,¹⁷ just days before Elizabeth's father passed away on October 11, 1862 at Salt Lake, Utah.¹

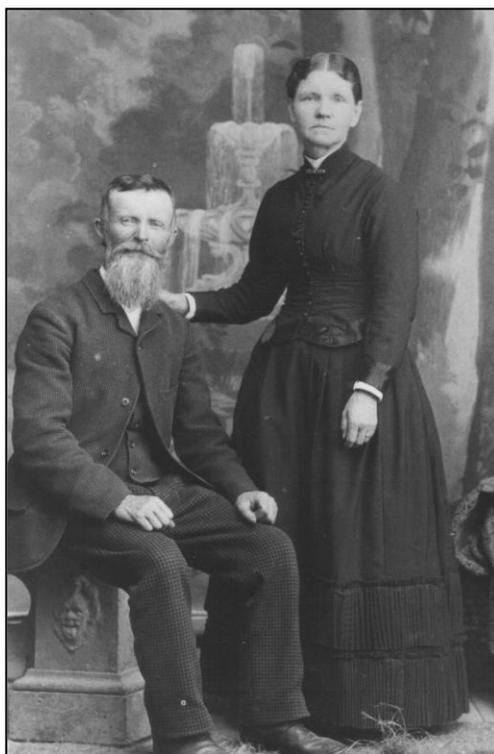
After their marriage, James and Elizabeth settled in Grantsville, Tooele, Utah where James and other family members were living, including his mother, Mary.¹⁸ James' father, John, had died October 4, 1853,¹ close to a year after the family had entered the Great Salt Lake Valley. It was after this that his mother moved to join other family members living in Grantsville.

James became engaged in farming and raising stock. James and Elizabeth had five children while living in Grantsville: James Stevenson born July 13, 1848; John Stevenson born March 6, 1865; Charles born November 30, 1866 and died the same year; Jesse born October 3, 1867 and Mary Elizabeth born April 3, 1870 and died the same year.¹

In November 1867, Elizabeth's mother, Mary Vickers Stevenson died at Salt Lake, Utah.¹

On May 16, 1870, James and Elizabeth were sealed in the Endowment House at Salt Lake, Utah.¹

James and Elizabeth were called to help colonize the Bear Lake Valley in Idaho.¹⁹ In the spring of 1870, they packed their belongings and moved their family to the small town of Liberty, Rich, Idaho.²⁰ Along the way or not long after they arrived their baby daughter Mary Elizabeth passed away and was buried at Lakeview, Rich County, Idaho.¹ Rich County later became Bear Lake County.



James Hutton and Elizabeth Stevenson
McMurray.

The country they were to call home was at first a wild and unproductive portion of land. Over time with James' skillful care and attention, and lots of hard work, it changed into a highly productive estate of 190 acres of valuable land. Eighty acres annually produced large crops of hay and the remainder yielded to other crop production. Eventually he owned a herd of approximately 70 cattle bearing his brand.²¹

James and Elizabeth had four more children each born at Liberty: Hannah Matilda born May 13, 1871; Fannie Lucinda born November 2, 1873; Bertha born November 5, 1876; and George Vickers born January 1, 1880.¹

James received his Patriarchal Blessing on July 31, 1876 at the hands of John Smith at Liberty, Bear Lake County, Idaho. He was given a blessing and a promise..."thou hast seen many changes past through trying events and suffered privations therefore I say unto thee be firm in thy mind put thy trust in the Lord for thou shalt receive they reward and in as much as thou wilt ask in faith thou shalt receive for the Lord will give unto thee as thou shalt merit."²²

James was described as a quiet and unostentatious man who steadily pursued a life of peaceful industry and good works, rendering tender care to his mother until her death in 1896. He stood high in the regards of a large circle of friends and admirers. He was generous and liberal as he participated in public improvement and was a major contributor to the Pioneer Creamery Association of Paris, Idaho and held a large block of its stock.²¹

James' granddaughter said of him:

"James was always active in the Church. He was a counselor in a bishopric. He was a High Priest and High Councilman. He was esteemed and respected by those who knew him. He was a small man weighing less than 100 pounds. He always wore a long beard. He was a very devoted husband and father. He was a successful farmer all his life. He had a dry farm up on the hill where they raised wheat. The land below the road, which was meadowland, provided hay, as did a section of land near Montpelier. They always had a good garden."²³

Elizabeth's granddaughter said of her:

"Elizabeth was a 'lady'. She weighed about 120 pounds. She was very prim and proper. She would always put on a pair of canvas gloves before she picked up a piece of wood for the fire. They had a seven room house. She was an immaculate housekeeper. The windows were washed every Friday, even if it was raining. Their parlor was a 'no-no' to children. It was to look at, not to touch. I remember she kept a broomstick in the corner of her bedroom. She used this to get all the wrinkles out of the bed spread. She

never left a room that she didn't stop at the door and look back to see that she had left things in order. She was active in the Church and was a devoted wife and mother.²³



James Hutton and Elizabeth Stevenson McMurray headstone at Liberty Cemetery, Bear Lake Idaho.

At the age of 76, Elizabeth Stevenson McMurray died on September 2, 1914 at Liberty, of what was thought to be heart trouble.²⁴ She was buried September 5, 1914 in the Liberty Cemetery at Liberty, Bear Lake, Idaho.²⁵

James Hutton McMurray died May 27, 1919 at Liberty, of encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain at the age of 89.²⁶ James was buried May 29, 1919 next to Elizabeth in the Liberty Cemetery at Liberty, Bear Lake, Idaho.²⁷

James and Elizabeth were remembered as true examples of a couple deeply in love, and devoted to each other.

Sources:

- 1 Family History Records in the possession of Karla Knapp Oswald. Dates, locations and other vital facts have been compared to and verified with records preserved within the FamilySearch data base maintained by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints available at FamilySearch.org.
- 2 Jeffery, Janet Fransen, *"History of the James Lake Jr., Family,"* digitized by the Genealogical Society of Utah – 2011, originally published: Roy, Utah, J. F. Jeffery – 1990. Section VI- 5, p. 2.
- 3 Minutes of the Quaker's Warrington Monthly Meeting, dated 4-7-1822 - sourced in *"History of the James Lake Jr., Family,"* by Janet Fransen Jeffery.
- 4 Jeffery, p. 3.
- 5 *"Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude,"* Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Mary Hutton McMurray, p. 1960.
- 6 Jeffery, p. 4.

Note: As was typical in early Church History, records for James, as well as other family members, show that he was re-baptized after 1844. Various dates for baptism are found in family history records, as well as records found within the official ordinance data base, FamilySearch, maintained by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to Janet F. Jeffery's reference in her book, *"History of the James Lake Jr., Family,"* when the McMurrays received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple it was recorded that they

were 'in the church'. It is believed and supported by family records that James and other member of the McMurray family were indeed originally baptized in early 1844 in Ohio.

- 7 "Nauvoo Restoration Records", "Church Members in Nauvoo 1839-1844." SL FH Lib, CR387-1 – sourced in *"History of the James Lake Jr., Family,"* by Janet Fransen Jeffery.

- 8 Nauvoo Temple Endowment Name Index <http://user.xmission.com/~research/family/familypage.htm>

- 9 "Nauvoo Temple Registry", SL FH Lib., Sp CI – sourced in *"History of the James Lake Jr., Family,"* by Janet Fransen Jeffery.

Note: As was typical in early Church History, records for James, as well as other family members, show differing dates for temple ordinances received. Family records, as well as records found within the official ordinance data base, FamilySearch, maintained by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, contain a variety of dates. It is believed and supported by family records that James and his family members received their original temple ordinances as stated in this life sketch.

- 10 Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel
<https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/pioneerDetail?lang=eng&pioneerId=46735>

Note: It is believed the family traveled with the Warren Snow Company – but Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel does not have official record of it, therefore and so it remains undocumented and they are listed in an unknown company.

- 11 *"History of the Stevenson and Vickers Families,"* author unknown, pp. 8-9. This history has been preserved for generations as originally written – copy in the possession of Karla Knapp Oswald.

- 12 History, p. 4.

- 13 History, pp.3-4.

- 14 Elizabeth Stevenson - Government record: An English Census: 1841; Breaston, Derbyshire, England, United Kingdom. Note with census record: occupation: Works in a silk factory; 1851; occupation: Silk Winder; 1861.

- 15 History, pp. 4-5.

- 16 Mormon Migration
http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:voyage/id:198/keywords:william+morris

- 17 Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel
<https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/pioneerDetail?lang=eng&pioneerId=29500>

- 18 "United States Census, 1860," Database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/MH24-3KF> : accessed 16 June 2015), James Mc Murray in household of Mary Mc Murray, Grantsville, Tooele, Utah Territory, United States; from "1860 U.S. Federal Census - Population," database, Fold3.com (<http://www.fold3.com> : n.d.); citing p. 305, household ID 42, NARA microfilm publication M653 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 805,313.

- 19 *"History of Bear Lake Pioneers,"* authors Dorothy Hardy Matthews, Edith Parker Haddock - Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Bear Lake County, Idaho – 1968.
- 20 "United States Census, 1880," Database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/M4ZN-1C1> : accessed 16 June 2015), J Mc Murray, Liberty, Bear Lake, Idaho, United States; citing enumeration district , sheet , NARA microfilm publication T9 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll ; FHL microfilm .
- 21 *"Progressive Men of Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Fremont and Oneida Counties,"* pp. 293-294, by A.W. Bowen & Co; Published 1904; Transcribed and submitted by Andrea Stawski Pack.
- 22 Patriarchal Blessing, No. 92 – Liberty Bear Lake County Idaho, July 31 1876, by John Smith.
- 23 Udy, Tessa McMurray – *"History of Tessa McMurray Udy,"* – written April, 1966. History was preserved by Tessa's daughter, Anne Udy Toner. A copy of the history is in the possession of Karla Knapp Oswald.

Note: Tessa McMurray Udy is a granddaughter of James Hutton and Elizabeth Stevenson McMurray.
- 24 Idaho, Death Records, 1890-1930 Ancestry.com.
http://sharing.ancestry.com/6736318?h=2df9f8&utm_campaign=bandido-webparts&utm_source=post-share-modal&utm_medium=copy-url
- 25 "Find A Grave Index," index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/QVV8-DL6L> : accessed 8 June 2015), Elizabeth Stevenson McMurray, 1914; Burial, Liberty (Bear Lake), Bear Lake, Idaho, United States of America, Liberty Cemetery; citing record ID 16607569, Find a Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com>.
- 26 "Idaho Death Certificates, 1911-1937," index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/FLYP-LYP> : accessed 8 June 2015), James Hutton McMurray, 27 May 1919; citing Liberty, Bear Lake, Idaho, reference 28499, Department of Health and Welfare, Boise; FHL microfilm 1,530,689.
- 27 Find A Grave, James Hutton McMurray (1829), Find A Grave Memorial # 16607666.
<http://www.findagrave.com>

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