

Jane Rixon Wilkins

1799-1877

Fact Sheet

Born: December 2, 1799 at Bucklebury, Berkshire, England¹

Daughter of: Mary Pauling and James Rixon¹

Married: Charles Wilkins Sr. on December 16, 1820 at Bucklebury, Berkshire, England¹

Mother of: Caroline Wilkins (1821-1829)¹
James Wilkins (1822-1895)¹
John Hatter Wilkins (1824-1905) immigrated to America¹
Jane Wilkins (1825-1902)¹
Charles Wilkins Jr. (1827-1896) immigrated to America¹
William Wilkins (1830-1831)¹
William Henry Wilkins (1831-1832)¹
Christopher Wilkins (1833-1902) immigrated to America¹
Elizabeth Wilkins (1835-1918) immigrated to America¹



Died: February 18, 1877 at South Cottonwood, Utah Territory. She was buried February 1877 in the South Cottonwood/Murray City Cemetery, Murray, Utah Territory.¹

Jane Rixon married Charles Wilkins, December 16, 1820 at her hometown of Bucklebury, Bershire, England.¹ Charles was a blacksmith by trade.² They became acquainted with missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints² and were baptized into the Church June 9, 1855.¹ Jane and Charles, along with their children, talked of leaving England and immigrating to America. The working conditions where Charles was employed were becoming more difficult for him and were affecting his

health, which made life for the Wilkins family more difficult each day. They believed that immigrating to America and making a home among other members of their faith would provide better opportunities for them.

Their son Charles and his wife Elizabeth left England in 1851. By 1854 Charles Jr. had arrived in the Utah Territory and was making his home there. Charles often wrote home to his family in England and encouraged them to join him in America. The challenge to pay passage for each member of the Wilkins family seemed impossible considering their meager situations. Finally enough had been saved to send two. It was decided that Charles Sr. and his youngest daughter, Elizabeth, would make the voyage and then travel to Utah. Once they were settled Charles Sr. would send for Jane.³ Charles Sr. and Elizabeth set sail for America April 23, 1862 on the ship 'John J. Boyd'.⁴

During the voyage, Charles Sr. experienced continual health problems. Days past and his condition grew worse. In a letter to her mother Elizabeth wrote:

"I expect you will hear before this reaches you that father is dead...father died near a fortnight before we landed at New York. He filled in with the dropsy very fast, which you need not be surprised for it was coming on before he left home."⁵

Charles Sr. passed away May 23, 1862 board the immigrant sailing ship, 'John J. Boyd' and was buried at sea in the Atlantic Ocean.¹

Elizabeth continued on her journey and found her family members waiting for her in the Utah Territory. Elizabeth and Charles Jr., continued to write to their mother and encouraged her to find a way to make the trip to Utah.

In August 1865, Charles' mother wrote him from Bucklebury, "If I had known how things would have turned out when Betsy and father went, I would have come along with them."⁶

Charles worked hard and finally earned enough money to help with the passage fare for his mother. He sent for Jane in February 1866. With the help of Church leaders in England, who managed the Church Immigration Fund,³ Jane made the necessary

arrangements and booked passage on the immigrant vessel 'American Congress'. On May 23, 1866, Jane along with 350 other Latter-day Saints left the docks of London and began their voyage to New York.⁷

In the general voyage notes it is recorded:

"The American Congress is the third ship which has left these shores this season, bearing the Saints of the Most High -- flying like a cloud towards the Promised Land.

The Almighty has blessed his Saints and servants thus far, during the business of the emigration, beyond their most sanguine expectations, for he has controlled the winds and the waves, and made them subservient to his purposes. . ."⁷

The passenger records for this voyage list Jane as being fifty-nine years old and as having the occupation of a nurse.⁷

This company of immigrating saints arrived in New York on July 5, 1866.⁷ From New York Jane continued to travel westward. Jane became a member of the Joshua S. Rawlins Wagon Train Company.⁸ The Company information states:

"Over 400 individuals and 65 wagons were in the company when it began its journey from the outfitting post at Wyoming, Nebraska (the west bank of the Missouri River about 40 miles south of Omaha).⁸

The Rawlins train left August 2, 1866 and arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley October 1, 1866.⁸

Jane found her anxiously awaiting family in South Cottonwood, Utah where she made her home with her daughter, Elizabeth Wilkins Steadman. Elizabeth lived near her brother and Jane's son, Charles.

Jane busied herself helping her family and serving her community of saints. She was active in the Church and received her own endowments in the Endowment House in Salt Lake, October 8, 1873.¹

Jane's desire to leave England resulted in an exciting adventure across the Atlantic Ocean and the busy towns and open plains of the American Territory. Her dream came true as she entered the Great Salt Lake Valley and was reunited with family members there. Her decision to leave Mother England had to take courage and was challenging and demanding of her in every way. The voyage and overland journey would have also required faith and rigorous physical efforts. But it is also important to note that Jane's leaving England meant she would likely never see her son John and her daughter Jane, and their families again. The efforts made by Jane and other early saints are a small reflection of the overall sacrifices made by so many to relocate and forgo because of their deep rooted faith in the Gospel message they had found and put their full trust in.

Jane Rixon Wilkins died at the home of her son, Charles, on February 18, 1877 at South Cottonwood, Salt Lake, Utah Territory. Jane was buried in the South Cottonwood/Murray City Cemetery.¹

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 Wilkins Reunion Committee, "*History of Charles Wilkins, Jr.*", compiled and edited August 1994. Some of the information from this booklet has been incorporated into this life sketch where noted.

3 "*A Life Sketch of Charles Wilkins Jr.*," compiled by Karla Knapp Oswald – November 2014

4 Mormon Migration, Liverpool to New York 23 Apr 1862 – 1 Jun 1862
http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:voyage/id:198/keywords:john+sutton

5 Elizabeth Wilkins Steadman, Letters of Elizabeth Wilkins Steadman - Five letters written by Elizabeth to her mother, Jane Rixon Wilkins. The letters were written to Jane while she was still living in England. Letter dated June 24th (1862). Brief summary of her journey west inserted after the letter.

6 The actual letter quoted from was at some point in the possession of a Wilkins family member. The quote has been included in various writings, but it is not known where the letter is at this time.

Jane wrote the letter to her son, Charles Jr. while he was living in Utah Territory and while Jane was still living in England.

- 7 Mormon Migration, London to New York 23 May 1866 - 5 Jul 1866
http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:voyage/id:21#.VEPySVYgqPg.email

Note: Jane Wilkins' occupation on the passenger list was nurse. It is believed Jane practiced as a mid-wife.

- 8 Mormon Overland Travel <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companyDetail?companyId=246>

This "Fact Sheet for Jane Rixon Wilkins" was compiled by Karla Knapp Oswald - revised November 2014