

## Two Boys and the Last Load of Lumber

James William Nixon 1<sup>st</sup> was called in 1876 to go to Mt Trumbull on the Arizona Strip to locate more water for the saw mill operation owned by the St George United Order. The lumber was for construction of the St George Temple. After the temple was completed in 1877, James continued sawing lumber for about three years along with farming, ranching and private lumber sales. Oxen were the main animals used in pulling the wagons loaded with timbers.

In 1880, James health failed him leaving three wagons loaded with timber to be delivered to the mines at Silver Reef, a distance of about 65 miles. He asked his son James, (the 2<sup>nd</sup>) age 14, if he and his brother George, not yet age 12, could do this. They loaded three wagons with lumber and water in 50 gallon barrels for the oxen. James drove three spans of oxen and two wagons and George drove two spans pulling one wagon. The boys walked beside the oxen.

Being small, they had to work together to move the barrels and dip the water out with a bucket into a tub for the oxen to drink. It also required both boys working together to lift the heavy wooden yokes over the necks of the ten oxen each morning and removing them each night.

All went well until a few miles from Hurricane at Gould Ranch some of the oxen were unruly and broke the 'reach' on one wagon. This necessitated unloading the wagon and taking a 2 X 6 out of the load to make a new reach. Having no auger, or a brace and bit they repeatedly heated the king pin in the camp fire and burned a hole through the new reach.

The second accident occurred while going down Hurricane Hill. They tightened the binders on the wagons and rough-locked the wheels. George was too small to drive his oxen down this terrible, steep hill alone, so James drove his oxen down the hill part way then came up to drive the other oxen down. George sat on the load of lumber, and as they were descending a rope holding a binder broke and the binder (2x6 12 feet long) came over hitting George on the head cutting his scalp open and knocking him off the load where he lay with his head bleeding profusely. From the last gallon of water in the canteen James gave George a drink then washed the blood from his face and head which continued to bleed. James remembered his father's instructions about prayer and remembered seeing the Elders placing their hands on the heads of people and giving them a blessing. James laid his hands on his head and prayed for him asking the Lord to stop the blood and not let his brother die. When he ceased praying the flow of blood had stopped and he placed George on the load and continued down alternately driving the ox teams until reaching the bottom of the hill.

The next day as they came into Leeds a man called out, "Where is your father?" James replied he is sick out at Trumbull. "Where is the man that is with you?" "There was no man with us". The man replied, "You don't mean to say that you two boys have come all the way from Trumbull alone do you?" "Yes sir we have made the trip all alone—yet I have felt all the way that we were not alone."

The boys reached the 'Reef' on the seventh day, delivered the lumber, collected the money, purchased supplies and returned to Trumbull with the oxen and wagons.

Taken from the Autobiography of James William Nixon (2<sup>nd</sup>) dated March 1937.

Typed by Bert W. Nixon