

# James William Nixon

James William Nixon was born 17 January 1836 in Liverpool, Lancashire, England.<sup>1</sup> He was the oldest of eight children of William Abraham Nixon and Bridget Degnan/Dagnall.<sup>2</sup> The family moved to Bangor, Wales, in 1838<sup>3</sup> and in 1841 were living in Llanbeblig, Carnarvonshire, Wales.<sup>4</sup> They immigrated to America in 1850, living in New York, then Ohio. They moved to Ramsey, Minnesota in 1852, where James' parents were divorced. His father remarried and had six more children. James was in business with his father (a store) in St Paul, Minnesota, when it burned down.<sup>5</sup>

James joined a Mormon ox train on his way to California. He was converted and joined the Mormon Church in 1857.<sup>6</sup> He was enrolled in the Junior Regiment Cavalry and served for two months in Echo Canyon. The unit was disbanded and organized into John Sharp's Infantry Regiment until May 1858. He worked for a while for Levi Stewart in Provo, then moved back to Salt Lake City. He chopped wood and drove teams at Camp Floyd. He did some trading and bought mules, wagons and cows. He married Johannah Marie Schultz in 1859 at Salt Lake City.<sup>7</sup> They lived in Summit, Utah Territory, in 1860<sup>8</sup>, where he worked as a farmer and a tin smith. The next spring they moved to East Weber, then rented the farm out and moved to Salt Lake City.<sup>9</sup>

In 1865, James was called to St George, Washington, Utah Territory, on a mission. He sold his farm, house, lot, and other properties and took his wife and three children to Dixie. He bought a lot, pitched a tent, and headed out for Los Angeles to buy tin smithing tools, machines, and material to start a business in St George. He built a house and worked his business in the basement.<sup>10</sup> He also bought plumbing and blacksmith tools, and later assisted in putting plumbing in the St George Temple.<sup>11</sup>

James served for one year in Captain Coplan's Company of the Utah Territorial Military during the Blackhawk War.<sup>12</sup> For the next few years he also was a freighter and teamster.<sup>13</sup> From 1871-1873, he was one of the early merchants in in Pioche, Nevada, known as the "Mormon trader".<sup>14</sup> then sold out and moved back to St George. James had a store built and engaged in hardware and tin smithing.<sup>15</sup>

In 1873, he served a mission in Minnesota.<sup>16</sup> He married Hannah Isabel Fawcett in 1876 in Salt Lake City. They had two children. He became the bishop of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward in St George in 1877, and married Zephyr Kelsey that same year in Salt Lake City. They had two children. In 1876, he was called to take charge of the saw mill at Mt Trumbull, Arizona. He and others also established cattle herds in the area.<sup>17</sup> He moved his family there in 1878. The lumber operations supplied timber<sup>18</sup> for the St George Temple and for Silver Reef.

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<sup>1</sup> Utah Early Mormon Missionary Database.

<sup>2</sup> *Familysearch.org*

<sup>3</sup> Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*).

<sup>4</sup> Wales Census, 1841.

<sup>5</sup> Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*).

<sup>6</sup> Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel; *Familysearch.org*

<sup>7</sup> Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*).

<sup>8</sup> United States Census, 1860.

<sup>9</sup> Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Utah Since Statehood: Historical and Biographical, Vol 4, p. 194.

<sup>12</sup> Utah Veterans with Federal Service Buried in Utah, Territorial to 1966.

<sup>13</sup> Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*).

<sup>14</sup> Utah Since Statehood: Historical and Biographical, Vol 4, p. 194.

<sup>15</sup> Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*).

<sup>16</sup> Utah, Early Mormon Missionary Database.

<sup>17</sup> Mt Trumbull and Mt Logan Wilderness Management Plan, 1989, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*).

In 1879, his family moved back to St George due to sickness, and he and one son stayed in Mt Trumbull. He was very ill and thought he would die that winter, but the weather cleared and he went to the doctor and discovered he had tumors in his chest. He had an operation in Salt Lake City but eventually died of cancer 19 February 1882 in his home in St George. He is buried in the St George Cemetery.<sup>19</sup> He left his oldest son, just sixteen years old, to support his large family.

Johannah died in 1922 in Provo, Utah, Utah.<sup>20</sup> Hannah died 1929 in St George. These wives were buried with James in the St George Cemetery. Zephyr remarried twice and died in 1942 in Salt Lake City. She was buried in Cedar City Cemetery.<sup>21</sup>



James William Nixon (Images from *Familysearch.org*)



James William Nixon family (Image from *Familysearch.org*)

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<sup>19</sup> Utah Veterans with Federal Service Buried in Utah, Territorial to 1966.

<sup>20</sup> Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964.

<sup>21</sup> Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*).



St George house (Image from Autobiography of J W Nixon the First (*Familysearch.org*))



(Image from *Familysearch.org*)