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Biographical Sketch

of

James Crystal

Janet Smith

by Vera S. Thompson

Pioneer Year 1866

Sailed on The American Congress

Captain Azra Thompson Company

Born: 19 Sep 1839, Boreland, Dysart Fifchire, Scotland

Married: 21 Sep 1871, Salt Lake City, Utah

Died: 22 Mar 1924

James the eldest son of James and Janet Hidd Crystal, was born in the village of Boreland, parish of Dysart Fifchire Scotland. September 19, 1839. At the age of nine years he was baptized to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, by his father, and filled all the offices of the lesser Priesthood in his early youth.

At the age of ten years he went to work in the coal mines and hence had little chance for schooling, and was what we call a self-made man.

His father having been accidentally killed in the mines when he was but a boy in his teens, having his mother and a family of eight, to be taken care of and provided for, James assumed the responsibility as best he could, until the year 1866, when he and his eldest sister, Mary emigrated to Zion, sailing from London the 1st day of May on the American Congress, and landing in Salt Lake City, the last of October of that year in Captain Azra Thompson's ox team company.

He had made his home here ever since and has helped in many ways to make this once barren and forbidden country what it now is.

On September 21, 1871 in Salt Lake City, James married Janet Smith, daughter of Alex & Elizabeth Young Smith, and sister of John and Andrew Smith well known for many years as members of the Salt Lake police force, and later on as guards and guardians of the church property there.

James was of a literary turn of mind and from time to time contributed poems and articles to the news papers and to the church publications, but especially so to the Juvenile Instructor whose editor always made his writings welcome.

He was for many years Stake Secretary for the Old Folks Organization and filled many other important church offices during his life among us, to the best of his ability.

His wife bore him three children, James, Alexander and Janet, the last named married Ammon Shelley of American Fork and bore him two girls. She died of diphtheria at the age of 23. Her oldest daughter preceding her but a few days, leaving but one surviving daughter, Vera.

Brother James Crystal was a straightforward man and well respected by his neighbors and all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. He was a kind husband and father, and a faithful and consistent Latter-day Saint, and has gone to his great reward. Ripe in years and sadly missed by a host of loving friends, March 22, 1924, at the age of 84.