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Biographical Sketch

of

James Spratley, Senior

by Mary Spratley Webb, daughter

Pioneer Year 1851

Alfred Cordon Company

Born 1837 in Wellsberg, West Virginia.

Married 22 Jun 1862 in Endowment House, SLC, Utah

Died 4 Apr 1925

James Spratley was born in Wellsberg, West Virginia, in the year 1837. He was the only son in a family of seven children. His father's name was George Spratley and his mother's Mary Brooks.

In 1850 he and his father joined the church and moved to Burlington, Iowa, where preparations were made to move westward. So in 1851 they joined the Alfred Cordon Company and started west. This company consisted of 52 wagons, 420 head of oxen, cows, and horses. They endured the hardships of the plains, escaping only by hairsbreadth the attack of the savage Indians. This was done by following the instructions to feed the Indian rather than to fight him. This company arrived in Salt Lake City September 15, 1851.

James Spratley came directly to American fork where he lived with the families of Ned Robinson, W. L. Robinson, and Washburn Chipman. He made several trips to the Missouri River (St. Louis) for provisions for the Utah Saints.

In 1862, June 22, he married Elizabeth Okey in the old Endowment House.

When Johnson's Army came to Utah, he volunteered to act as guard for the Territory. He helped to pile the heavy rocks and to prepare to exterminate the army if it were found necessary. He also served in the Black Hawk War against the Indians. For this work the National Government pensioned those who served.

At one time he was City Marshall of American Fork and held other civic offices. At his death he was a High Priest in the Latter Day Saint Church.

He was the father of twelve children – six boys and six girls. He died a natural death April 4, 1925.

There are many incidents in the life of James, which are very interesting. At one time while the railroad was being built at Ogden, a band of Sioux Indians made a raid on the graders along the road bed. All speed was made to camp and prepared to battle. The Indians retreated and led the workers, who followed them into a trap. Shooting from both sides of the men while some stampeded some of the horses and then left without any bloodshed. He made four trips

to the Missouri River and on each of these trips encountered hardship and fighting Indians.

He knew John D. Lee, Jim Bridger, Porter Rockwell, Brigham Young, and many leaders of the church and prominent men of that time.

On one trip he stopped on the Platte River for two weeks and, with others, strung twenty-two miles of telephone poles. The Indians at this time took most of their cattle, leaving them with a team or three hear each, so they divided up their remaining ones and made teams for them all.

Another exciting time was had when a herd of stampeded buffalo compelled them to form their train in a triangle shape, place their cattle inside the improvised corral, and then all went out with guns to change the oncoming herd, which was done by shooting the leaders and frightening the rest. Many narrow escapes were had in fording the Platte River and the Green River, getting in quick sand and devising means of getting out. He also was a wonderful hunter of big game – deer, bear, buffalo, and a good sport in later years.