

HISTORY OF ROBERT JAMES MURRAY

Robert James Murray, son of David Murray and Elizabeth Wood was born at Bonneyrigg Edinburgh, Scotland on the 14th of August 1819. He married Jessie Archibald about 1841 and lived in Bonneyrigg Scotland. They were very happy in striving to make a home for them selves and children. Mining was the occupation he followed. They were blest with three sons.

While in Scotland, David, the first son was born in (22 Feb) 1842 and died in infancy. James the second son was born 25th Feb 1844. As was the custom of that time, if one child died in infancy another child was given the same name. Their third child, was born 23rd Feb 1849 so he was also given the name of David.

One day they were visited by the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and they became interested and began investigating. After a thorough study of the new religion they were baptized into the Church on the 14 July 1848. They immediately began making preparation for immigrating to Zion or Utah. At this time the British Government was offering some very enticing inducements to families who would go to Australia and help colonize that country. In July 1851, he with his wife and children, and the family of David Hamilton and Agnes Archibald Kerr bought passage to Australia.

The two families were already to leave when it was learned that their boat was not seaworthy and must be put in dry dock for repairs. This was somewhat of a sad disappointment to them for they had sold all their belongings and had no place to go. So they decide to come to America, they money they had, paid for their passage on the sailing vessel. They spent 11 weeks on the ocean and were glad when they sighted land. They had many varied experience on the trip, some pleasant ones and some not so pleasant. There was some suffering, but as their hearts were set upon getting to America they were brave. They landed at New Orleans on 1st Jan 1852. They took passage on a boat up the Mississippi River and landed at St Louis. There they located and as mining was their occupation in Scotland they obtained employment in the coal mines and worked for sometime. While here another fine sone was born on 28th May 1853 and he was named William. While in St Louis they learned of a Mr Somerville, a cousin of David Hamilton Kerr, he was Superintendent of a coal mine at Clinton Pennsylvania. This place being non-Mormon and mostly miners, these good people seemed to loose the spirit of religion and did not make any effort to get to Utah. After living at this place for a number of years and working at the mines steady they were able to save a little money.

After a few years Mr Somerville was replaced as Superintendent of the mine by a man of Irish descent. This man dismissed the workmen and hired men of his own people. This was a great disappointment to them. Mr. Somerville bought for himself a farm and urged Robert and David to do like wise. Soon a farm was located that was satisfactory to both families. It was owned by a widow lady and the terms were very reasonable, but she wanted ten days to decide. During this time it was learned there were good prospects of oil on her farm. This decided her to double the price for her farm, making it impossible to buy the farm.

Soon after this Robert Archibald a brother of Jessie's and Agnes arrived from Scotland. He was very interested in the change of the faith of the two families. He began preaching the Gospel to them and soon the spirit of Mormonism was received in their hearts. He encouraged them and soon they were on their way to Salt Lake City, Utah. They sold their house hold articles and everything not needed to make the trip.

They caught a train from Pennsylvania to St Louis, while in Pennsylvania Robert Jr. died. Their first baby girl Mary Agnes was born in 1859 and died in infancy, this baby was born in New Orleans. The boy John born in 1852 died when he was about 7 years old (1859).

I must pay tribute to this very noble family for the courage and fortitude they have exhibited into trying to get to the land of the West. They set as their Ideal, Zion where the Saints were gathering and where they could live and worship God as they saw fit. In leaving Pennsylvania they traveled in Ohio. Here they made the acquaintance of some people who were on their way to Salt Lake City, and had chartered a steam boat to take them from St Louis to Florence Nebraska. They were granted the privilege of coming with this company which was a great help as they knew nothing of the requirements for the long journey. Friends from St Louis had made arrangements for some of the men to buy the necessary oxen, wagons and provisions, but owing to some delay the cattle and wagons were three wks late in getting there. On June (unintelligible) 1861 they left Florence Nebraska. In the Jobe Pingree Company they came West. It was a very successful trip with very little sickness and no deaths. There was one birth for this family a little boy was born 12th July 1861 at Wood River Nebraska, and they named him Thomas. The baby was but a few days old when Jessie was again walking along with the other women of the company. We must here pay tribute for the faith, courage and endurance of these brave women on the memorable journey. They arrived at Salt Lake City 10 Sept 1861, and camped out three miles south of the city so their cattle could have food because they were so thin.

It was here they met a man whose name was George Woods and said he was located at Wellsville Utah. After talking with him for a while he asked where they were going and they said that they didn't know, but they had relatives somewhere in Utah. After telling him their names which was James Arichibald and John Hendry he said that he knew them and they were located in Wellsville. They decided that they would also go to this place. On the night of the fifth day they were on the hill over-looking Wellsville and they decided this was where they would stay. This was on the 15th of sept 1861.

They lived in a fort for four years. The houses of Robert Murray and David Kerr were side by side each having about 24 feet of ground to grow a garden. On 21st June 1864 a baby girl was born and named Christena. In the spring of 1864 they received 10 acres of land in what was called the new survey. The houses were built of log and one large room 16 by 14 ft. a dirt floor and roof. On the 9th Jan 1867 a boy was born and was named George Henry. Four years later the ground was plotted out in city lots. Robert Murray bought a lot and built a log house on it. Later he built a better home and is the lot where William Jones later built him a home. In this home was experienced much joy and happiness. All were busy and contented. The family lived congenially together, they were taught the principles of the gospel and of right living, love of God and love for their fellow man. It was in this home on the 8th of Jan 1873 that this fa(m)ily experienced one of the greatest sorrows that comes to a family, which was the passing of a dear wife and mother.

Robert James Murray was a faithful Latter Day Saint, a True and noble pioneer as well as a kind and loving father. He passed away after a brief illness on the 8th Nov 1884 at Wells ville Utah and was buried beside his wife in the Wellsville City Cemetery.

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