

LIFE HISTORY OF JAMES DENNING 1830 - 1898

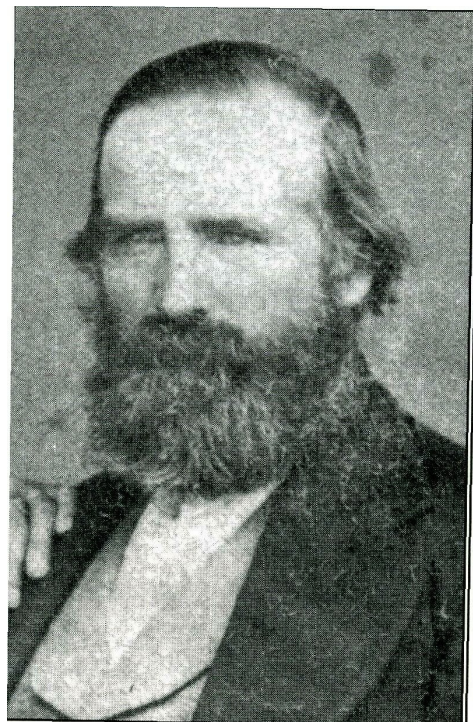
Written June 27, 1937 by Rosanna Williams Denning

James Denning, son of Henry Denning and Martha Nichols, was born at Coleford, Kilmerston Sommersetshire, England on 2 Mar 1830. His father was a Colier (miner). When very young he went to the mines to work, he never had the opportunity of attending school.

July 8, 1849, he married Sarah Merrifield at Tahowan, England. After their marriage, his wife taught him his ABC's and he learned to read, was a great reader, read everything he could get hold of and became well versed and could talk intelligently in discussions on most every subject.

They joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1850. My father, John Williams baptized them Jan 5, 1850 at Abeceycan, South Wales.

On Feb 15, 1853 they went on board the ship called "International" to sail from Liverpool, England. Their baby, James Henry was three weeks old. The ship laid in the Irish Channel until 28th of Feb. Before sailing. It was waiting for favorable weather conditions. There were 425 Saints, under the direction of Christopher Arthur aboard. Baby James Henry took terribly ill on this hard two month voyage, he was thought to be dead, so they strapped his body to a board (as was the custom) and raised the board to shove him overboard. One of the saints shouted "Wait, I believe I saw the baby breathe." They pulled the board back and unwrapped the baby and HE WAS BREATHING. He lived to fill a noble and wonderfully useful life, loved and respected by everyone.



They arrived in New Orleans Apr 23, 1853. They came to Salt Lake City with the Capt. Daniel Millers Ox team Co. There were 282 people, 70 wagons, 27 horses, 470 cattle, 153 sheep. They left camp at Winter Quarters, June 9, 1858. They endured great hardships, having to walk a great deal of the way. Food was rationed out to them, they all shared alike. After their arrival here Sept ?, 1853, they settled in Bountiful, Utah. He helped build the Spanish-type wall around Great Salt Lake City, Utah, for protection against the Indians. It was during this year that Chief Walker waged war against the new citizens of Utah and many lost their lives. On Dec. 29, 1853 the Church Chronology (paper) states that the so-called Spanish Wall would be 12 feet high, 6 feet thick at the base, tapering to 2 feet 6 inches at a height of six feet above the ground, and keeping that thickness to the top. It was to be six miles in length and made of adobe and rock.

He was a veteran of the Echo Canyon war and also assisted in bringing emigrants to Utah. After 1860 the practice of sending wagons and teams from the valley to carry the emigrants from the East, eliminated the need for handcart travel after that year. Many people who could not afford to purchase wagons and teams were not able to make the 1,800 mile journey by this cheaper mode of travel. James and Sarah also helped to settle a town at the top of Big Cottonwood Canyon, it is now know as Brighton, Utah. He was a hard worker and very strong.

In 1858 they moved south, then came back in 1862 and settled in Logan, Utah. In 1862 a large emigration arrived from Europe. The church sent teams to the Mississippi River to bring the saints across the plains. James Denning drove 4 yoke of oxen in this train also. He and his family were commissioned to Bear Lake in July of 1864.

Later on they settled at Montpelier, Idaho. They went through many hardships. I have heard Mother Denning tell of making moccasins out of cowhide. There were no shoes to be had. The snow was so deep that they could not get out until spring. They had to card, spin and weave their own clothes. Most of this work fell to the women. The men worked hard too and together they prospered, even though the wheat froze every year during this time.

They had 13 children, all but one grew to manhood and womanhood; his name was William and he died when two years old, with the croupe. The family moved to Malad in Oct. 1877 on a dry farm. He made a good home for his family.

He died May 2, 1898 at Malad and is buried at St. John Cemetery, near Malad, Idaho. Two headstones mark the graves of James and his dear wife Sarah; on these two headstones are the engravings of two clasped hands. On her's it reads: "Sarah Merrified, wife of James Denning, born Aug. 19, 1832, died Jan 9, 1900. She was a kind and affectionate wife and a fond mother and friend to all". On the headstone of James Denning, born March 2 1830, died May 2, 1898 is written; "Amiable and beloved Father. Farewell. Not on this perishing stone, but in the Book of Life and in the hearts of Thy Afflicted Friends is thy worth recorded". The headstones were placed there by their son, James Henry Denning. What greater tribute could a son give to his beloved parents.

At the time the above history was written, June 27, 1927, James Denning had 5 children living, 105 grandchildren, 207 great-grandchildren, making a total of 317. Now 40 years later none of us know the correct total of descendants.

Part of this history was written by Rosanna Williams Denning on June 27, 1927 and the rest written June 27, 1967 by Pearl Denning Barren, from church and family records for a Denning Family Reunion, to help us all to be more grateful of our heritage and the price that it cost our dear ones.

In the James Henry Denning Sr. Family History. Vol. 1 the following information is gleaned:

(James Henry is a son of James Denning)

Section III, Pg. 51 – Regarding the construction of the Bountiful Tabernacle, "James Denning laid up the adobe."

Section III, Pg. 53 – The Homesteads Map shows James Denning's home located North of 2800 North on the West side of 2900 West in St. Johns just south of Malad, Idaho. The Homestead receipt on page 52 shows it as lots 6 and 7. The cemetery is located against the West Mountains.

Section III, Pg. 56 – A list of the men involved in the "War in the Mountains" shows James Denning as a Private in the 6th Platoon. It states that "The militia unit was poorly outfitted. The entire unit had 11 rifles, 1 musket, 1 bayonette, 1 colt revolver and 1 other pistol, 10 shotguns, 2 swords, 8 lbs. Of powder, 16 lbs. Of lead, and 2 boxes of caps plus 490 single caps. If all other companies were as bad off as the one from Bountiful, how were they to successfully

engage a trained army of 5,000 in battle? Yet the men never doubted their ability.” When the morning call to arms came, “a call was made for 4 horses, a wagon, harnesses, and beef to be accompanied by two men to go to the battle front. The rest of the men were sent back home.”

Section III, Pg. 57 – A chart of the city Bountiful settlement year by year, shows James Denning in the year 1854.

Discrepancy:

Section III, Pg. 55 – There is a discrepancy of the day of birth. It is shown in life stories as both the 2nd and the 3rd day and the year is both 1829 or 1830. However, on this page, there appears to be someone's notes copied that shows birth on the 3rd in the year 1830, however valid that may be. On page 11, shows the date of birth 2 March 1829. Only a copy of the birth certificate will clear up the matter.

Section III, Pg. 11 states the following:

James Denning was born 2 March 1829. His parents were Henry and Martha Nicklas Denning. When James was about 20 years old he left Kilmersdon England to work in the coal mines in Abersychan in Monmouth, Wales.

James married Sarah Merrifield the 8 July 1849 at Tahwan, Momms, England. Sarah Merriifields parents were Uriah Merrifield and Jane Denning.

James and Sarah were married 8 July 1849 in Abersychan, Wales. James and John Jones Williams met and became good friends and later brother-in-laws when John Jones married Jane Merrifield, Sister to Sarah, James Denning wife. James and Sarah Merrifield are the parents of James Henry Denning.

James and Sarah were both were both baptized 5 January 1850 in Wales by John Jones Williams. (Note: John's daughter later married James' son, James Henry)

On 15 of February 1853 both couples boarded the ship "International" to sail from Liverpool, England. The ship laid in the Irish Channel and finally sailed. 28th of February 1853. James and Sarah's second child James Henry Denning was three weeks old. While on the ship John Jones' and Jane's first child Elvira Ann was born on 28th of February 1853. The Captain of the International was David Brown. There were 425 emigrants on board along with twenty-six members and a few non-member friends. They arrived in New Orleans on April, 23, 1853. The Dennings and Williams continued their journey by ferrying up the Mississippi River to Keokuk, Iowa. They were part of a ten pound company. They came on to Salt Lake City with the Capt. Daniel Millers Ox Team Co. There were 282 people, 70 wagons, 27 horses, 470 cattle, 153 sheep. They left Winter Quarters, now Florence, Nebraska, on June 9, 1853. John Jones was captain over 20 teamsters and did the black smithing for the entire company. They arrived in Salt Lake City September 9, 1853. They all settled in Bountiful, Utah.

Section IV, pg 5 - James and Sarah Merrifield Denning left Abersychan, Monmouthshire, Wales, England on February 15, 1853. They had joined the LDS Church in 1850 and were now boarding the ship, the SS International. The ship was anchored in the Irish Chanel. However, the ship didn't set sail for America until February 28, 1853. There were 425 Saints aboard ship under the leadership of Christopher Arthur. They arrived in New Orleans, April 23 1853. There they joined a company of emigrants leaving for Winter Quarters, the last Saints from Pottawattamie County, Iowa. They left Winter Quarters June 9, 1853 on their way west.

The Denning family settled in Big Cottonwood, near Bountiful, Utah. They remained there only one year then moved into Bountiful and stayed until 1858. When Johnson's Army came into the valley the Denning family went south for a while and then were called to help settle Logan, Utah. In the spring of 1863, the family was again called to help settle Bear Lake. They lived at Montpelier, Idaho. There they helped build roads, ditches, bridges, homes and church buildings. James Denning was a good blacksmith and stockman.

Sec IV pg 11 states that James Denning was a builder when he got to Utah.