

# History of James Morris & Sarah Trussler Farmer

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James Morris Farmer was born 12 November 1816 in Ledbury, Hereford, England.<sup>i</sup> He was the third of nine children and the first son of Richard and Elizabeth Morris Farmer. James was a stone cutter and worked in the rock quarry. He married Sarah Trussler on 5 February 1842. She was from Steyning, Sussex, England. Her parents were John and Sarah Chambers Trussler.

James and Sarah were the parents of 7 children. James Fredrick was the oldest, then Emma Jane, Agnes Ann, Fredrick Richard, Elizabeth Ann (Annie), and Mary Ellen, who died in infancy. Then on 26 August 1851, Sarah gave birth to a still born baby and passed away that same day. She was buried with her infant in her arms.

James left Emma, Agnes, and Elizabeth with Sarah's parents in Steyning while he went to work. He kept his boys, James and Fredrick, with him part of the time and at other times left them with relatives. Aunt Fanny Trussler Howels, their mother's sister, kept James while Uncle Fred Trussler kept Fredrick.

In 1846, James and Sarah had heard the Elders explain the gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They were converted and in July 1848 they were baptized by Elder Thomas Smith. Immediately following baptism James became very active. He helped to form a branch of the church in Witham, England.

James married for a second time. His wife's name was Mary Ann Biddle. They had a son whom they named Willard.

James' family, which consisted of his mother, Elizabeth, his brothers, Richard and John Edward<sup>ii</sup>, and their wives, and his sisters, Emma and Mary, all joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They all desired to come to America.

Emma married Henry Arnold in St. Louis in 1848. They settled in Fort Herriman. Utah. The next year, the rest of the family was ready to leave their native land.

James went to Steyning to get his children from Sarah's mother. The Trussler family was very bitter against James' family for joining the Church. He had to take his three little girls by force. They had hidden his little boys and he couldn't find them. The date to sail had come so in despair he met his family in Liverpool. On 26 May 1856 his mother, Elizabeth Farmer, James and Mary Ann, with their baby Willard, Emma (age 12), Agnes (age 11), Elizabeth (age 7), along with Richard, his wife, and James' sister, Mary, all set sail on the ship *Horizon* from Liverpool to America.<sup>iii</sup>

It was a rough voyage. The mother, Elizabeth, was in poor health before she left England. She, along with little Elizabeth and baby Willard all became so seasick, it seemed as though they would die. The family exercised their faith in prayer and fasting, and the Lord blessed them all to reach American soil in safety.

After the voyage came the long trek across the plains. They started for Utah in John Hunt's Company, which was late into the season getting started. They all walked, making it a very long, hard journey. Little Elizabeth, who had been so very ill, would become so weary that her Aunt Mary would carry her on her back for a while to rest her. Willard became ill and died. Somewhere in Iowa<sup>iv</sup> their beloved mother, Elizabeth, died. Richard and his wife stayed behind to bury her. Richard became so embittered with all the trials he never did go to Utah to live.

James had been very prosperous in England. He brought many possessions with him, including some trunks with beautiful silk dresses that were Sarah's that he wanted his little girls to have. When they reached Laramie, Wyoming, he knew he had to lighten his load, so they could travel faster. He dug a hole and buried \$1,500 worth of his possessions, marked the place, and planned to return for them. He never did.

From Laramie they hurried on but winter overtook them. At Devil's Slide, in Echo Canyon, they had to leave all their clothes except what they had on their backs, and saved only a scanty ration of food. The snow storms came and it seemed they would perish with cold, hunger, and fatigue. Imagine their joy and gratitude when they were met by teams and men to help bring them to Salt Lake City. They arrived there two days before Christmas on 23 December 1856.

James went through seven months of trial. He broke up his home, leaving his two sons whom he loved so dearly, not knowing if he would ever see them again. He spent six weeks on a rough ocean voyage. He buried two of his loved ones on the plains, leaving behind his brother Richard and family. He had to leave all of his cherished possessions in Wyoming and arrived in Utah with only the clothes he was wearing. James bravely faced his situation and soon he had a home and began to accumulate their need.

The Salt Lake Temple had been started, but the foundation had not been accepted and had to be removed. As James was a stone-cutter, he was made foreman over the men who removed and then rebuilt the foundation.

James maintained a home in both Herriman and Salt Lake City. In the summer he cared for his sheep and farm. In the winter he worked as a stone cutter, chipping the granite into blocks and laying the walls of the temple.

He was a good business man and prospered steadily in gathering the bounties of life. He was very active in helping to sustain the immigration fund. He sent teams back to Missouri to help needy Saints come to Utah. He also paid the way for thirty-seven Saints to come to America from England.

James was involved in the move south when Johnson's Army came into Utah. If the army came into the Salt Lake Valley, they would burn the homes to the ground. James's responsibility was to oversee the travel of the women and children as they journeyed to Pond Town (which is now Salem, Utah). He rode a horse and assisted all who met with problems.

James' second wife, Mary Ann, died leaving two little girls, Sarah and Mary Ann. He married a third wife, Clara Davis. Then on 20 March 1876 he married Jane Morley Phillips. They had four children: James, Richard, Clara, and Emma.

After they had grown to manhood, James' two sons, James and Fredrick, came to America with their wives to be with their father and sisters. It was a very joyous occasion for all.

James Morris Farmer loved the gospel and his family. He did temple work for his family and had all of them sealed to him. James died 25 January 1895 at Herriman.

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<sup>i</sup> He was christened "James Farmer" and added the name "Morris" later in his life.

<sup>ii</sup> He was christened "Edward John" but at times went by the name "John Edward." Some LDS church records list him as "John Edwin."

<sup>iii</sup> Family records state that John Edward and his family were with them. This is incorrect as they sailed 4 May 1856 on the ship "Thornton" (p 21). The shipping list for the "Horizon" for 25 May 1856 --James Farmer, Mary Ann Farmer, Emma Jane, Agnes Ann, Elizabeth F., Willard, Mary, Richard Farmer, Harriet, Elizabeth. and Anne M Farmer (pp 24, 28).

<sup>iv</sup> Other family records state that the Mother Elizabeth Morris Farmer died in Chicago in 1856. Neither record has been proven.