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The Life of James Clark Owens
Written by Josie Owens Swallow, Granddaughter

James Clark Owens, son of James Clark Owens Sr. and Cordelia Abigail Burr Owens, was born July 7, 1832. He was the youngest in a family of five. Horace Burr, Cordelia Rebecca, Caroline Amelia, Julia Minerva, and James Clark Jr.

The saints were being driven from place to place at this time. When James was about six years old some of the children took refuge in "Haun's Mill" during a raid. Several were shot, but James escaped by hiding and remaining quiet. Hunger and violence were not strangers to James.

James was baptized by Abraham Hunsaker in 1843. He knew the Prophet Joseph and loved him. He went with his mother to visit the prophet while in prison. He was present at the conference of the Church after the Prophet's death Aug. 8, 1844. When Brigham Young arose to speak, the mantle of Joseph fell upon him and he was like the Prophet in voice, gesture and spirit. He spoke with great power to the people. Even as a boy James said he knew Brigham Young was the one to lead the church.

James' father was a stone mason by trade. Often working for 25 cents a day because he was a "Mormon."

While James was 14 his father died of exposure during a severe snow storm while seeking work. For six years the family worked to get enough money to cross the plains. His two sisters lost their husbands and came home with their children. This made a family of 10 to be cared for. They arrived in Utah in 1852. They first went to Provo. The next spring they moved to Fillmore and as a stone mason was soon cutting and laying up stone for the State House and other buildings.

James married Lucretia Proctor Robison Jan. 16, 1856 in the new State House with Brigham Young officiating. The next year they were called to go to Salt Lake City and cut stone for the temple. There were 12 men and their families. They lived on tithing which sometimes were very scarce. By July a load of green garden products and fresh butter was brought to the hungry appreciative people.

James was at the celebration when word was received about Johnson's Army coming to Utah. He with the other stone masons, were called to prepare provisions and ammunition for thirty days and then register as "Minute Men." They did as bidden, but each of the three times they were called they were released to continue cutting stone.

James worked on both the St. George and the Manti temple. He always responded to any and every call made of him. In 1878 he was called to go to Arizona and settle. They made several moves and in 1879 President Woodruff called James and his family to go to Woodruff, Arizona to oversee the construction of a dam across the Little Colorado River at that point.

For four long years the men labored before they finally had a successful dam and water available for their crops. Seven families were living at Woodruff in very difficult condition. He worked in that area for 13 more years and then moved back to Fillmore where they lived for four years before going back to Woodruff, Arizona where he died February 1, 1901.

His friends recall with pleasure, his sincere hospitality and his willingness to give food and lodging to friends and strangers. His home was a rendezvous for all church authorities and his table, though at times almost bare, was set for anyone who came.

He had been a good father and comrade to his children. He and Lucretia had, had twelve children in all.