

Washington Taaffe McDonald

From the original Sexton Records:

Name: Washington McDonald

Age: 12y; 0m; 0d

Relationship: Son John & Rachel McDonald

Deceased: June 25th, 1847

Disease: Not known

Birth Place: Philadelphia, Pa.

Birth Date: Aug. 9th, 1835

Grave No. 165

Birth Date: August 9, 1835

Birth Place: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Death Date: June 25, 1847

Cause of Death: Unknown

Burial Place: Winter Quarters Grave #165

Father's Name: John Kilpatrick McDonald

Mother's Maiden Name: Rachel Burke Taaffe

Which Winter Quarters Ward or Iowa Branch was the family: Unknown

Where was the family in the 1850 U. S. Census? Listed as a cabinet maker, Family #9, in Great Salt Lake, Utah Territory

Which Pioneer wagon train took the family west? Initially, John traveled without his family to the Salt Lake Valley in the Ezra T. Benson Company in 1849. He then returned east to his family.

In 1850, the McDonald family traveled to the Salt Lake Valley with the Warren Foote Company. The McDonald family included John Kilpatrick and his wife Rachel Burke Taaffe, and their children William Taaffe, John Taaffee, and James. John was the Captain of the 5th Ten.

At the end of a mission to Ireland, John returned home with the Edward Bunker Company in 1856. He served as a counselor to Captain Bunker.

Any interesting facts or stories that might have been submitted.

In 1834 the family journeyed south across the border to the USA and settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. John worked in the cabinet making trade and became successful. Politics held his interest and he also became involved in the Journeymen Cabinet Makers Association. Two more children arrived while the family lived in Philadelphia-- Washington (who lived only 12 years) and James. Again the moving spirit struck John and in 1838 the family (now consisting of six children) ventured west to Pittsburgh. After being in Pittsburgh for about a year, John started his own cabinet business. Their eighth child, Jane, was born in Pittsburgh in March of 1840. However, in August of that year both Jane and 7-year-old Alexander died. Their last child, Joseph, was born in January of 1842, but died two weeks later. The religions of that day didn't interest John. However, in 1842 an apostle of the LDS Church, Elder John E. Page, was in Pittsburgh preaching the Gospel. One day John was passing by and stopped to listen to what this street preacher had to say. It was unusual doctrine compared to the norm of that time period. Several times he listened to Elder Page and each time went home and told Rachel about it. A Methodist minister at that same time was visiting Rachel and was admonishing her to join his church. She told him she first wanted to hear what the Mormons had to say. After they listened to Elder Page several more times, they believed what he was saying was true. In June of 1842 they were baptized in the Allegheny River. John soon became an elder and he too began to preach the gospel. Their desire to be with the main body of the church led them to close up their business in Pittsburgh and head west. (John and Rachel were the only two of 300 members that joined the church in Pittsburgh that did not apostatize.) In the fall of 1842 the family arrived in Nauvoo, Illinois where they met with some resistance from apostate Mormons. They first rented a house on Main Street near the Prophet's mansion house. Their children played with the Joseph Smith's children; Fred, Alexander and young Joseph. Later they moved into one of Hyrum Smith's houses and lived there until driven out of Nauvoo. John tried to find work, but none was to be found in Nauvoo in his trade, so after making arrangements with church leaders to watch over his family, he went south to St. Louis, Missouri. Their son, William (now 17 years old) accompanied his father and they secured employment there. Every two or three months they went back to Nauvoo to visit the family. While in St. Louis John and several other saints organized a branch of the church there. In 1844, after a little over a year in St. Louis, John and William were returning to Nauvoo for a visit when they received word that Joseph and Hyrum Smith had been killed. They didn't believe it could be true, but upon arriving they found it to be so. They had already been buried. Rachel and her children had viewed the bodies as they lay in state in the Mansion House. They also spoke of John Taylor being brought home from Carthage Jail pierced by three or four bullets, weak and pale from loss of blood. Also, they remembered Governor Ford coming to Nauvoo at the head of his troops and giving a rousing speech, giving the mob at Carthage motive to murder the prophet and patriarch. John then stayed in Nauvoo and worked on the Temple to its completion. John reportedly built a spiral staircase in the temple out of hardwood which had no support except at the top and bottom -- said to be a creation of great beauty. Constant awareness of mobs in the area made it difficult to work on this project. The workers had to keep their guns and ammunition under their benches for protection. However, in 1846 the temple was completed, and Rachel and John received their endowments there. President Brigham Young had previously counseled the saints to be prepared to leave Nauvoo, and organized the Association of Wagon and Blacksmith Shops to make wagons to enable the Saints to move west. John and son William worked in one of these shops for a year without pay (except for an occasional cornmeal and meat ration). All these men were promised a good outfit with which to move west, but never got it. John feared late in 1846 that he was going to be left, so he started making himself the running gears for a wagon. He then sold all of his valuable books and everything they could spare for

a yoke of wild three-year-old steers. Young John had a yoke of yearling calves which they also used to pull the wagon. Word came early in 1846 to leave and they loaded up their possessions and headed toward the Mississippi River. The journey went better than expected. Stopping at Bonaparte, Iowa, John worked at wagon making and built another wagon. After arriving in Council Bluffs, he built a one-room log cabin where the family stayed for the winter. It had no roof, but was covered with willows, then dirt. Everyone suffered from illness. John had severe fever; the others got scurvy and black leg. Their 12-year-old son Washington died there in 1847. John made a coffin from his wagon box and he and son William carried it across the frozen Missouri River to Winter Quarters, where they buried young Washington. Times were hard. The saints died off by the hundreds with black Leg and scurvy due to lack of vegetables. The McDonalds had very little to eat but parched corn. Securing his family at Council Bluffs for the winter, John went south and found work at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, becoming a foreman at a government wagon shop there. The next spring, he returned to Council Bluffs to move his family to Kansas. After about a year they all traveled back to Winter Quarters where they made preparations for their trek west. After being persuaded to trade off his outfit to an old gentleman for his farm, John was again without money or wagon to make the trip; so he and son William again worked at wagon making. Finally, on June 13, 1850 the family of John, Rachel and their three children, ages 14 to 26, left Winter Quarters for the Great Salt Lake Valley with the Warren Foote Company. By June 30th they had traveled only 11 miles. John became very dissatisfied with the order of travel, as well as the spread of cholera. On August 31st, John and several others left the company and went on ahead. They arrived on 15 September 1850; the others followed 11 days later. John worked in the Public Works on the Temple Block. He hauled wood but of the canyon during the day, and played his fiddle for dances at night. ([https://www.familysearch.org/photos/artifacts/25759858?p=14399104&returnLabel=John%20Kilpatrick%20McDonald%20\(KWJW-TGK\)&returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.familysearch.org%2Ftree%2Fperson%2Fmemories%2FKWJW-TGK](https://www.familysearch.org/photos/artifacts/25759858?p=14399104&returnLabel=John%20Kilpatrick%20McDonald%20(KWJW-TGK)&returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.familysearch.org%2Ftree%2Fperson%2Fmemories%2FKWJW-TGK))