

John White  
A Brief Sketch

Early in the morning of June 24, 1835, at Seend, Wiltshire, England, Isaac and Mary White rejoiced in the birth of their son John. He lost his mother in death when he was but four years old. Isaac, John and his sister Jane moved to Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire, soon after the death of their wife and mother. Because of economic circumstances it was impossible for John to benefit from schooling. He therefore, went to work as soon as he was old enough.

Isaac married Eliza Bull who bore him a son Henry. His wife Eliza and son Henry died a little later and were buried at Steeple, Ashton. Isaac then married Polly Bull and they had a son James.

The family, which included John, his father, stepmother, and brother joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They were baptized by Levi Jefferies in 1854. In 1856 they emigrated to Utah. After landing at New Orleans, Louisiana, they took a river boat up the Mississippi and Missouri rivers for Florence, Nebraska. Outfitters were assembled in preparation for crossing the plains to Utah. During this trip John's stepmother and brother James took sick, died, and were buried on the bank of the river.

While encamped at Mormon Grove, Nebraska, cholera broke out and John contracted the disease. He recovered in time and accompanied his father across the plains. They arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fall of 1856. Soon after their arrival they obtained work from Winslow Farr, who was obtaining building materials from the mountains.

News was received on July 24, 1857 that an army was advancing with the intent to putting down a rumored rebellion of the Mormons against the Government. The U.S. Attorney General, William W. Drummond, made false charges suggesting that the Supreme Court at Salt Lake City had been destroyed, that Federal Officers were grossly insulted, and that conditions existed that called for a change of the Governor. It was also charged that military action was in order to assist the government to function. News of the approaching army caused people to believe that they were going to be mobbed and driven from their homes once again. Governor Young issued a proclamation placing the territory under martial law. Men were sent east to block the road through the canyons and to prevent the U.S. troops from entering the Salt Lake Valley. John White was called to go with the Utah troops. The Mormon's policy was to prevent the army from entering the valley until the U.S. Government could complete their investigation.

Through the mediation of Thomas L. Kane; Alfred Cummings (who was sent to Utah with the Federal Troops to replace Brigham Young as Governor of the Territory) entered Salt Lake City without escort. He was cordially received and installed as Governor on the sixth of April, 1858. On the second of May, Governor Cummings sent a report to Lewis M. Cass, Secretary of State, stating that he had examined the records of the Supreme and District Courts, and the Legislature of Utah. He found them unimpaired and in excellent condition, thus refuting the representations that had been made against President Young by Judges Drummond and Stiles.

Governor Cummings also stated that the people were determined and if the army was allowed to enter Salt Lake City the citizens would move out and destroy all their improvements. At that time roads were filled with wagons loaded with provisions and household furniture. Women and children, often without shoes, were driving their flocks to an unknown destination. Governor Cummings and his wife proved to be very sympathetic and friends to the Mormon People. They tried to persuade the citizens to return to their homes, but did not succeed at this time.

A Peace Commission was sent by President Buchanan during the first part of June. Governor Cummings, Brigham Young, and other leaders held meetings on the 11th and 12th of the month. Problems were resolved thereby allowing the Federal Army to enter the Valley. It was agreed, under the promise that it would not trespass upon the rights or property of peaceful citizens, that troops would not be quartered within forty miles of Salt Lake City.

On the 26th of June the army passed through the city. Houses were vacant, and the yards overgrown with weeds. Piles of straw and other combustibles were placed ready to fire the town. The army passed through Salt Lake City onto Cedar Valley where it founded Camp Floyd. Still the people hesitated to return to their homes and waited to see what action of the army would take. July found the wandering citizens returning to their homes. Governor Cummings proclaimed peace, a President's pardon was issued and thus ended the Echo Canyon War.

Employment, money and provisions were hard to obtain and so John White assisted in building soldiers barracks at Camp Floyd. He worked with Robert and Alfred Berrett who had also emigrated from Steeple Ashton, England. After a short time he accompanied them to North Ogden and claimed property located on Coldwater Creek and on the West side of what is now Washington Blvd. He and his father built a double log house, cleared and plowed the land and started farming. His sister Jane married Thomas B. Brown on May 13, 1857. Brown's constructed a home adjoining theirs on the North.

In the Spring of 1863 he was called to return to Florence, Nebraska to assist additional Mormon emigrants. While on this trip he met Eliza Brown. She was a young girl that had been assigned to his wagon. The return journey took about two months and they arrived in Salt Lake on October 4, 1863. He married Eliza on November 18, 1863. They had three children, Mary Eliza, born November 3, 1864; Sarah Jane, born December 5, 1866; and Annie Louise born June 10, 1869.

He was a man of fine physique and great strength which he freely used in redeeming the desert by clearing land, hauling timber from the mountains, and building roads and constructing irrigation ditches. He assisted in building the road through North Ogden Canyon, and also the North Ogden Canal. He was one of the first directors of the Canal Company.

In the Spring of 1866 he and Alfred Berrett travelled to Omaha, Nebraska with teams and returned to North Ogden with the first threshing machine, a mowing machine and a molasses mill. They also had acquired other farming implements.

On February 6, 1869, he took sick and died five days later on February 11, 1869 at the age of

thirty-three years. After his death his wife moved from the White farm to a smaller one nearer the town of North Ogden. She lived there until her death, January 28, 1929.