

Life in Utah Fifty Years Ago Our Gallery of Pioneers

David Jenkins

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There have been few "Paul Reveres" in Utah history, but at least one Utah pioneer might have claimed that distinction. David Jenkins, one night in 1860, rendered a service in time of danger easily comparable with the service rendered by the famous Revolutionary hero. Hostile Indians in upper Cache Valley, under Chief Washakie, had planned an attack on the scattered settlers. Warned in time of their intent, Elder Ezra T. Benson, of the Council of Twelve, dispatched David Jenkins, fearless, dependable, and 20 to warn the inhabitants of the valley all the way to Clarkston of the danger and with a call to gather at Smithfield. In the blinding darkness he made the ride over the sparsely settled section that is now dotted with farms and villages. At the swollen Bear river the way seemed blocked, but horse and rider plunged in the mad current. Breasting the torrent, the youth riding high to free the steed all possible for swimming, they reached the Clarkston bank. The alarm given, men in numbers met at Smithfield and seeing his plans awry, Washakie was glad to make peace. Instead of fighting there was feasting on the tabernacle square at Logan, as earnest of good will on the part of the settlers, and the Indians were given cattle and provisions. But the settlers had been ready for any eventuality, due to the midnight ride of the Utah "Paul Revere."

David Jenkins was born in 1840, son of John and Elizabeth Williams Jenkins, in South Wales. The family came to America in 1855, settling first in Pennsylvania to procure means to continue on to Utah. They crossed the plains in Captain John Smith's company arriving in the valley in August of 1860. They went immediately to Logan, and thereafter David Jenkins worked always for the upbuilding of the community and of the commonwealth. He worked on the Union Pacific railroad, on the Central Pacific and on the Utah Northern. He performed a mission to his native land and ever was on hand for service. By training he was a blacksmith and he engaged also in the express business. In this latter he contributed his service free, hauling meat which had been contributed to be sold or exchanged for material for use in the construction of the Logan tabernacle. He also engaged in the merchandise business and in later years worked in the Logan temple. He died in April of 1925, just one year ago.