

# James Robert Rickards

James Robert Rickards was born 2 December 1846 in Sprigg Township, Adams, Ohio. He was the eighth of ten children of Henry K Rickards and Josephine Margaret Neil. He was known as Robert, Bob, and J. R. Rickards during his life. His mother died in 1853 and his father remarried and had three more children.<sup>1</sup> James lived with his family in Sprigg Township on the 1860 and 1860 censuses.<sup>2</sup>

J. R. was a teacher, living in Pioche, Lincoln, Nevada, in 1875.<sup>3</sup> By 1880, he was living with his half-brother in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. They were both working as stationers.<sup>4</sup> That year he married Julia Ann Hatton and they had two daughters.<sup>5</sup> Julia died in childbirth in 1883 in Silver Reef and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery.<sup>6</sup>

Bob Rickard designed and built a chute from the Pine Valley Mountains to the road below, to be used to transport cut logs. He invited everyone to a grand opening celebration to watch the first logs come down the several thousand-foot long chute from the top of the mountain to the base. The first two logs went well, but the third jumped the chute and then bounced back to lie against the chute. The following logs crashed into it and soon the chute was destroyed by broken, crushed, and splintered logs. Bob invited all for a drink to celebrate his grand "closing".<sup>7</sup>

James married Julia Ardena Hales Berry in 1894 in Parowan, Iron, Utah Territory. They had no children. In 1895, James was chosen as a delegate to the Republican county judicial convention.<sup>8</sup> He and his family had moved to Kanarra by 1896<sup>9</sup>, and on the 1900 census he was working as an engineer there.<sup>10</sup> On the 1910 census, he was a miner, living with wife and daughter and her family in Cedar City, Iron, Utah.<sup>11</sup> He was a pioneer teacher at Cedar City.<sup>12</sup> He was elected Iron County Assessor in 1905 but did not run for a second term.<sup>13</sup> He was chosen as delegate to the Republican Primary and the state convention in 1912.<sup>14</sup> He was a delegate to the Republican Convention held in Cedar City in 1920.<sup>15</sup>

James was heavily involved in mining in the county. He was involved in the formation of the Standard Consolidated Mining Company, which took over a group of twenty claims in Chloride Canyon (one of which was his claim). He was a director of the new company.<sup>16</sup> He was vice president and a major stockholder of the Copper Zone Mining Company near Newcastle and manager of the Silver Peak

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<sup>1</sup> *Familysearch.org*

<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1850, 1860.

<sup>3</sup> Nevada State Census, 1875; *Salt Lake Herald*, 18 February 1896, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> United States Census, 1880.

<sup>5</sup> *Familysearch.org*

<sup>6</sup> *BillionGraves.com*

<sup>7</sup> *Silver, Saints and Sinners*, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 163.

<sup>8</sup> *Salt Lake Herald*, 6 September 1895, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Salt Lake Herald*, 18 February 1896, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> United States Census, 1900.

<sup>11</sup> United States Census, 1910.

<sup>12</sup> *Deseret News*, 3 April 1931, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> *Iron County Record*, 10 March 1905, p. 5; 14 June 1912, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Iron County Record*, 3 May 1912, p. 1; 10 May 1912, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Iron County Record*, 23 April 1920, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, 15 March 1910, p. 8.

Mine.<sup>17</sup> He was the manager at the Bullion Canyon mine when it had its huge strike in 1918, and he felt that his forty years of persistent prospecting and mining was finally rewarded.<sup>18</sup>

In 1915, he reported his 32-caliber Special Winchester rifle lost and then stolen and offered a reward for its return.<sup>19</sup> Several years later, his wife was sick with rheumatism and was practically an invalid and bedfast until her death in 1919. She was buried in the Cedar City Cemetery.<sup>20</sup> In 1917, he reported in the *Iron County Record* that someone had plowed up the Silver Reef Cemetery to plant corn, removing the headstones and throwing them in a pile. He wanted to pay to have his family members moved to a better resting place. Mr Vincent wrote to the newspaper identifying himself and explaining his side of the story. He explained that he owned the land west of the grave yard, sold by deed to him by Bishop B. Y. McMullen of Leeds. Bishop H. A. Jolly and R. P. McMullen were farming on the east and south sides of the grave yard.<sup>21</sup>

Vincent had three graves on his land that were protected from desecration by a fence, and he was paid to upkeep the graves by the family who lived elsewhere. He explained that I. S. McMullen, justice of the peace and a stone mason, had hauled a pile of rocks for his business and that was what J. R. seemed to think was a pile of gravestones. J. R. allowed that he may have been wrong about the pile of rocks, but that he and two others could see clear evidence of the presence of graves in the corn field on the west side of the cemetery. He stated that while he lived in Silver Reef he personally observed at least a half dozen people buried in the portion of the cemetery now being farmed.<sup>22</sup>

Water had been allowed to flow in the area and sink a number of graves. He also claimed that that area was unpatented mineral land held by Captain Lubbock, who gave the land for the town cemetery. So if Mr Vincent indeed owned the land, it must have come from a quit claim deed from a locator and subject to the requirements of the laws governing mineral locations. He also offered witnesses to his claims. He stated that he would exhume his loved ones and remove them to Cedar City when the weather permitted.

The matter was suggested to be resolved by charging Vincent, and digging where the graves were believed to be to decide whether they had been plowed up or not.<sup>23</sup> A month later, the paper posted a statement and a list of signatures that verified J. R. and the newspaper accounts. The fifteen undersigned men insisted that the county authorities investigate the matter. There was also an affidavit from two local men stating that they had spoken to Vincent when he was plowing and that he admitted plowing up several graves.<sup>24</sup>

J. R. He spent the winter of 1918 in southern California for his health.<sup>25</sup> On the 1920 census, he was a miner, living with his daughter and her family in Cedar City, Iron, Utah.<sup>26</sup> He married Clara Morgan in 1922 in Iron, Utah.<sup>27</sup> They later divorced, and on the 1930 census, he was living alone in Los

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<sup>17</sup> Iron County Record, 9 July 1915, p. 1; 3 December 1915, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Iron County Record*, 25 October 1918, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Iron County Record*, 9 April 1915, p. 1; 23 April 1915, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Iron County Record*, 28 November 1919, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Iron County Record*, 24 August 1917, p. 3).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

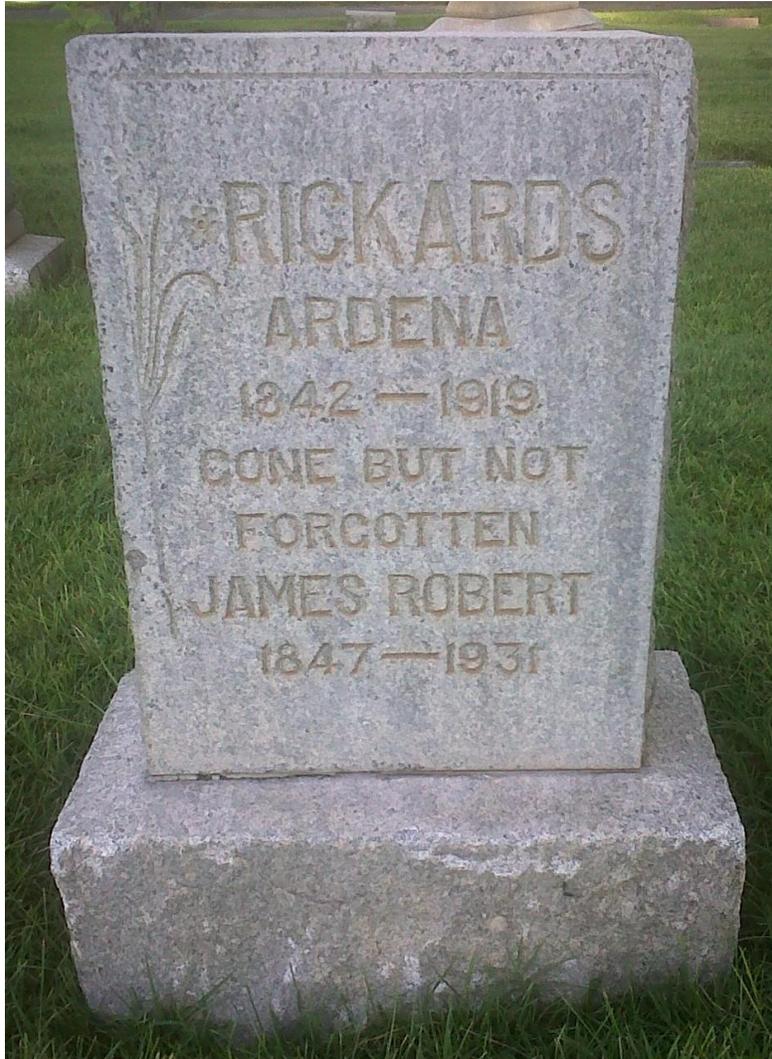
<sup>24</sup> *Iron County Record*, 21 September 1917, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>25</sup> *Iron County Record*, 9 January 1920, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> United States Census, 1920.

<sup>27</sup> Utah Marriages, 1887-1966; Utah County Marriages, 1887-1937.

Angeles, Los Angeles, California.<sup>28</sup> He died of a cerebral hemorrhage on 30 March 1931 in Cedar City, Iron, Utah. Buried in Cedar City Cemetery.<sup>29</sup> He was considered “a veteran and experienced mining operator and millman” in the industry.<sup>30</sup>



(Image from *Findagrave.com*)

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<sup>28</sup> United States Census, 1930.

<sup>29</sup> Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964; Utah Death and Military Death Certificates, 1904-1961; Utah Death Registers, 1847-1966.

<sup>30</sup> Intermountain Industry and Engineering, Vol 21, 1920, p. 42.