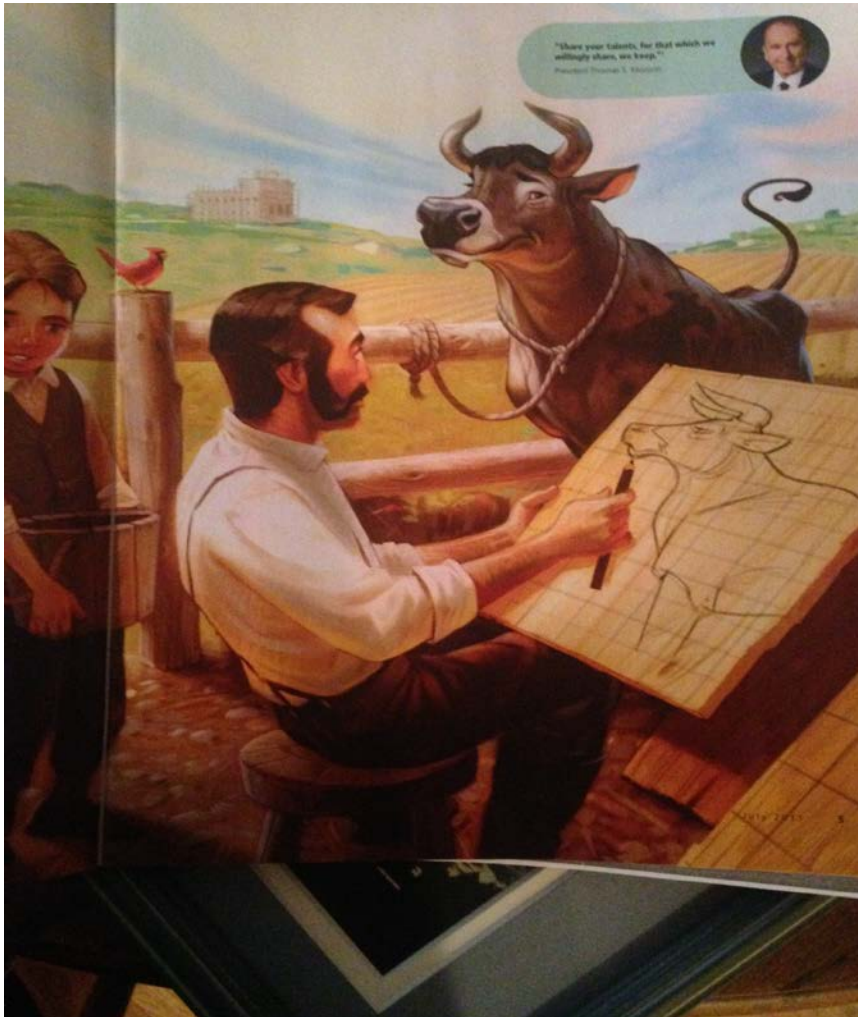


## JOHN CARLING



When my mom passed away 21 July 2011. The Church magazine “The Friend” happened to be running a story about John Carling, 1800 – 1855, who Brigham Young had asked to carve the pattern for the 12 oxen that held up the font in the Nauvoo Temple. At Mom’s burial in the Fillmore cemetery, one of her granddaughters had the magazine with her and wanted to find John’s gravestone. We found it, a piece of native red sandstone about 24 inches high by 14 inches wide, varying from 2 to 4 inches thick. It was carved simply on one side **J C**, and laying flat on the ground. The bottom 4 inches was stained where it had stood upright for 150 years, before being knocked over by the lawnmower. Somebody said, “Someone should make John a new headstone.”

Try as I would, I couldn’t get that statement out of my mind. I have an art degree from BYU, but hadn’t done any sculpture for decades, and none in stone. If I was

going to do it, it had to represent the oxen and the font, had to fit the neighborhood of the other more substantial headstones where John's grave lay, and had to be done in Nauvoo limestone, since Nauvoo was "John's Temple." Still not committing to the job, I did several sketches and finally came up with something I thought was worthy.

I was one of 150 volunteers who assisted the 2,500 paid workers on the Nauvoo Temple, and knew who had cut the stone for the exterior cladding. I called Idaho Travertine and told the owner there what I wanted to do. He acted as if he'd been expecting my call. Pres. Hinckley told him, once the Nauvoo project was over, to take all the scraps and leftover pieces of stone out and bury them. He didn't want any "Mormon Idols" floating around. It was now 10 years later, but Idaho Travertine had a large piece of Nauvoo limestone that had been used as a machine base until a few days previous, and would I like to have it?



Of course I would! I jumped into my truck and drove to Idaho Falls. The "piece" was about 8 ft. square, 18 inches thick with the machine base bolts still sticking out of it, and weighed thousands of pounds. They were nice enough to cut off about a head stone sized piece and load it into my pickup. As the truck sank on its' springs. I knew I was now committed.

Using the automotive lift in my shop to hoist the stone out of the truck I put it on a rolling base so I could move it around. This is where the prayers began. After my regular daily projects, I'd work on the sculpture for 2 or 3 hours, starting each session kneeling by the stone and asking for guidance. Using crayons (they don't stain the surface, and can be easily removed) I sketched John's name, birth and death dates, and a "bas relief" of an oxen's head. They didn't look comfortable together, and from somewhere I got the thought that the first font was made out of tongue and groove pine. The pioneers were anxious to do baptisms, and the stone font was months away. Doing a representation of the pine grooves, in a circular pattern representing the round font made a nice transition from the blocky dates and letters to the curves of the ox's head. Much later I checked on the tongue & groove story, and found it to be correct. Whew!

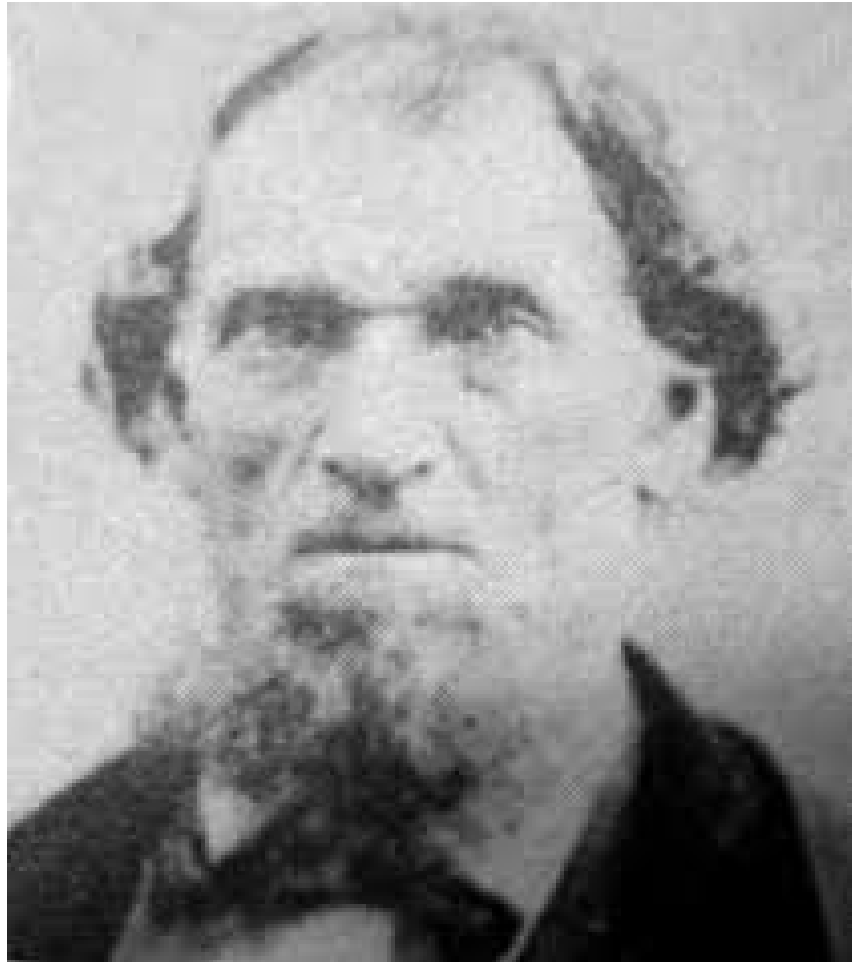


Using a slab of 2" x 14" pattern grade mahogany I'd had in the attic of my garage for at least 30 years, I cut and glued strips together on which to carve a full size model of the bas relief ox head. Then I made a paper pattern to transfer that onto the stone, and used a ¼ inch drive grinder that we normally grind steel with to carve the limestone. It worked perfectly.

Toward the end of the project, I knelt down onto the cold concrete floor, it was now October, to ask for help as usual. During the prayer, I got the clear message, couldn't have been clearer if I'd been handed a note "**Don't worry, we're all here.**" I immediately asked "**Who's we, and where are you!**" No answer.

I built a base for the stone and poured concrete around it, then relieved the back of the stone and grouted the original sandstone marker into it in such a way the base helps hold it in. For some reason, this whole project came together nicely.

JOHN CARLING circa 1850



I'm looking forward to reuniting with the generations of my ancestors represented by those headstones in the Fillmore Cemetery. Let's hope the stone lasts there for at least another 150 years.

Duane Carling

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JOHN CARLING  
1800-1855