

AMELIA EVANS

Born: 8 April 1838 Wales
 Age: 18
 Willie Handcart Company



Amelia Evans was born in the area of Gwspyr, Flintshire, Wales, to Anne Blythen and Peter Evans. She was the oldest or second oldest of at least six living children who immigrated to Utah. However, Amelia left Wales five years before her parents and siblings.

Anxious to gather to Zion, Amelia boarded the ship *Thornton* in Liverpool, England, in May of 1856. She may have been with some relatives, the McPhersons of Scotland. Most of the Saints on the ship were English, others hailed from a number of other countries. Amelia's parents and siblings sailed in 1861 aboard the *Monarch of the Sea*, with "no less than ten nationalities being represented – all actuated by one motive, all possessed of one faith, filled with the spirit of love and unison, going to Zion"¹

Amelia also traveled to Zion with motives of faith, love and unity. As a member of the Willie handcart company, Amelia drew a handcart with friends for over 1,000 miles, beginning in Iowa City, Iowa. A biographical sketch of a fellow traveler, Andrew Watson, reveals Amelia's character:

"At Rocky Ridge and South Pass a fierce storm was encountered, and again the heroic little band [was] thrown into terrible danger. Fifteen died from the fatigue and exposure during one night and day. Brother Watson himself was thoroughly exhausted, and would have perished but for the kind efforts of some of his companions who encouraged and urged him on. He makes special mention of a Sister [Ellen] Tofield, a Sister [Amelia] Evans, and of William Leadingham, a captain of the guard, who proved themselves in that awful extremity devoted and self-sacrificing friends."²

Andrew Watson also shared this event with his children and grandchildren. It was retold later by his granddaughter, Margaret Mitchell: "Andrew, pushing his handcart, became exhausted and fell during a blizzard along the trail. Two women in camp missed him and went back many miles to find him; put him into his handcart, and pushed him back through the snow to safety. He was so near gone that when he was placed near the campfire to get dry and warm, he did not know that his clothing had caught fire."

In family histories of descendants of Amelia Evans, it is reported that she was known by friends in the Willie handcart company as "Charity Evans" because of her many kindnesses to others. "Amelia was an unusually kind and affectionate girl. She not only gave sympathy to the sick on the trail, she waited on them doing everything she could to make them more comfortable. She also shared her herbs and spices with them."³

Amelia married William Washington Camp in February of 1857. They had five children, and sadly lost four of them as infants. They also adopted a little girl named Deseret. In 1864, Amelia and William Camp were granted a divorce. Amelia subsequently married William Davis or Davies. They had ten children, most of whom lived to maturity. William Davis may have also adopted Deseret Camp.

Amelia was an excellent cook and seamstress. She was active in Relief Society work, and she also worked in the Salt Lake and Logan Temples. Amelia died at the age of 48. Her youngest child was just five years old. Amelia is buried in Samaria, Idaho.

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The following is a poem written by Amelia's granddaughter, Amelia Davis Everett.

AMELIA EVANS – HANDCART PIONEER OF 1856

She smiled through tears. It was so hard to school
Her feelings as the Thornton sailed away.
It was eighteen-fifty-six in early May
She said good-bye to friends and Liverpool.

In all her eighteen years she had not known
Such mingled joy and sadness in a day;
She choked on tears; next moment she was gay
And proud to go to Zion all alone.

She winced to think she might no more return
To England's cities, wooded trails and rills,
And Wales – gay little land behind the hills
Where she was born, for these she knew she'd yearn.

And Mountains of her Flint, in northern Wales,
Enchanted mountains, running into sea;
And castles of great age - Her pedigree
Made her a part – Yet now she sails.

Away from kin, emotion fathoms deep –
Why, baby sister Rhoda might grow tall
Before enough is earned to transport all
The nine she loves. She must not weep!

God will sustain them all. Her new faith stirred!
She tossed her chestnut tresses, blinked a tear –
The call that moved her forth now banished fear
With joy, for Zion's trumpet had been heard!

--Amelia Davis Everett, Granddaughter⁴

¹*Millennial Star* 23:21 (May 25, 1861), 328-29.

²Interview with Andrew Watson, July 1893, by LDS Church Historian Andrew Jenson. (See Andrew Watson story in Willie company section of *Tell My Story, Too*.)

³Interviews with Sherry Bird, Tooele, Utah, and Gail M. Smith, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁴Source for poem: www.welshmormonhistory.org

