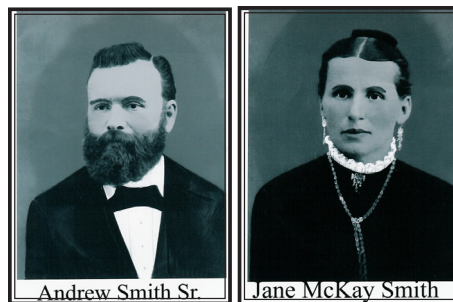


## ANDREW SMITH

Born: 1837 Scotland

Age: 19

Willie Handcart Company



Andrew Smith was the son of Alexander Smith and Elizabeth Young. He was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on January 29, 1852, just short of his 15th birthday. His boyhood was spent herding cows, mining coal, and working in the cotton mill and Paisley shawl factory near his home in Scotland. Andrew may have met his future wife, Jane McKay, while working there. Jane's sister, Frances McKay, also worked at the mill and was engaged to Andrew's brother, John Young Smith. At the tender age of 13, Jane was in love with Andrew Smith.

One night when Andrew visited the McKay home with his brother, John, he told Jane that he had listened to some young men preaching and he believed what they told was the truth. Jane said that she would also like to hear them and she arranged to meet Andrew to go with him that night. From the girls' bedroom above the main part of the house, Jane's sisters helped her out the bedroom window, on to the roof of a nearby shed, and on to the ground to meet Andrew. Her sister, Mary, went with her as a chaperone.

As Jane's mother had taught her children from the Bible and given them passages to memorize and recite, Jane and Mary asked intelligent questions of these preachers from the LDS Church. They believed what the missionaries taught was truth. Frances was waiting up for Jane and Mary when they returned home and gave her the news that Andrew promised to bring his brother, John, to the next meeting. Frances arranged to go with them. The McKay sisters then shared their plans with their married sister, Martha. Martha and her husband, David Fisher, agreed to have the Mormon missionaries come to their home to teach.

Jane's parents eventually learned what their girls had been doing. Their mother was unhappy to learn of their association with the Mormon Elders as she had only heard negative things about them. Jane's father, Joseph, however, had felt there was something lacking in his Bible study, and was anxious to go with Jane to the next meeting. Soon all the McKay family except James McKay, were baptized members of the Church and made plans to emigrate to America. Andrew Smith and Joseph McKay would go first to prepare the way.

Andrew and his future father-in-law left England in 1856 aboard the *Thornton* under the direction of returning missionary James G. Willie. The majority of the emigrants in this group became the 4th handcart company. Andrew became a trusted member of that company and was put in charge of the other 18 people assigned to his tent. This group included three widows with their children, (Margaret Kirkwood, Margaret Caldwell, and Elizabeth Kirkpatrick families); four young single women, (Barbara Kelley, Margaret Darglish, Ann Tait, and Christina McNiel); 22-year-old John McCulley, and 57-year-old Joseph McKay. Andrew also oversaw commissary duties for the people.

As nights became colder and rations were reduced, the old and the sick began to fail and Andrew's responsibilities became heavier. The Willie Company was hit with a heavy storm on the 19th of October that finally brought the company to a halt. A few days later, when the advance rescue party reached them with help, the most difficult part of their journey still lay directly ahead. They had a steep climb across the Rocky Ridge to reach the next camp at Rock Creek Hollow before they could stop again. As they fought through the terrible wind and storm of that day, many faltered, including Joseph McKay.

(Andrew Smith - Page 2)


Joseph had collapsed from the strain of the tortuous trek and blizzard ascending Rocky Ridge and was left for dead. Andrew Smith found him, lifted him and carried him over the summit of the mountain. Andrew then kept returning for others until he was finally forced to stop by other members of his company. Millen Atwood, a captain of 100 in the Willie company reportedly cried out, “Hold on there, Andrew boy, hold on there. You’ve done enough, my boy. The Lord knows you’ve done enough!”

Andrew arrived in his promised valley with the Willie company on November 9, 1856. He continued to live a selfless life of service, which was memorialized in an article by Solomon F. Kimball in the Church publication *Improvement Era*, January 1913. It was titled “The Hero of Linister.” The following poem was included in that account by Kimball:

Through drifting snow this boy would go, With freezing pilgrims on his back,  
Through rivers deep, through slush and sleet, And o’er the hills he ‘broke’ the track.  
He climbed the heights, then sat up nights, Nursing the sick and burying dead;  
His heart would bleed when he would feed, Poor, helpless children without bread.  
With dauntless will he fought on still, Saving the lives of all he could;  
Though he could feel his strength of steel, Waning for want of needed food.

Andrew and Joseph McKay soon set to work to bring their families to Zion. In 1859, Andrew sent all his savings and with some help from the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, brought his family and the McKay family to America. They traveled with the George Rowley Handcart Company. Andrew and his childhood sweetheart, Jane McKay, were finally able to be married and moved into the home Andrew had built. Andrew’s son, Andrew Smith, Jr., wrote a tribute on the 100th anniversary of his father’s birth. Following are some excerpts from that tribute:

“I am justly proud [of my father]. He was honest with his fellowmen. He was true, moral, indeed he was in keeping with the thirteenth article of our faith; he did hold the faith and keep the truth. He set a good example to his children and to all his associates worthy of emulation. . . . I am hoping that when my course is finished here on this earth, I will not be ashamed to meet him . . . My father was beloved by all good people; he was a friend to the authorities of the church, a body guard to Presidents Young, Taylor, Woodruff, Snow, Smith and Grant. He was a private nurse to President Woodruff for several years before his death, and to President Snow and several of the Apostles. Since his early manhood, he could be depended upon in anything he was asked to do by the leading brethren and was beloved by all of them because of his loyalty. . . . May the memory of him and his good qualities be remembered and followed in good deeds by his descendants forever, and our election will be sure.”



Sources: “Joseph McKay & Martha Blair,” by Ila May Maughan (Fisher), 1967, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; “The Hero of Linister,” by Solomon F. Kimball, *Improvement Era*, January 1913; “Andrew Smith,” by Andrew Smith Jr.; “Letter to M. Blair Smith,” from his father, Andrew Smith, Jr., 1937 (concerning the life of his mother, Jane McKay); tent list in *History of William Woodward*, 1980 & 2005; photos and family histories from Nathan McKay Smith, Provo, Utah, and Nathan L. Smith, Perryton, Texas.