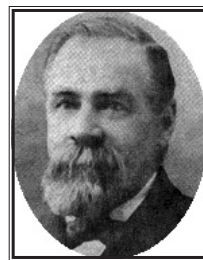


ELIZA CHAPMAN GADD

Born: 1816 England
 Age: 40
 Willie Handcart Company



Alfred Gadd and mother, Eliza

Eliza Chapman Gadd joined the Willie handcart company with her husband, Samuel Sr., and eight children: Alfred (age 18), Jane (16), William Chapman (13), Samuel (10), Mary Ann (7), Sarah (5), and Isaac and Daniel (one year old twins). Daniel died October 4, just a few days after the company reached Ft. Laramie. Five days later, October 9, Samuel Gadd, Sr. died of pneumonia. Samuel had contracted a cold while on guard duty at Iowa City and never gotten better. Alfred Gadd made these two brief entries in his daily diary: “Oct. 9. We went eighteen miles. My father was dying before we left this morning, but they put him in a wagon and when we saw him at noon, he was dead. Oct. 10. We buried Father this morning.”

Although rescuers were already on their way from Salt Lake, the weather for the Willie company was reported as “splendid” at this time. But a freezing blizzard of an early winter was just a little over a week away. Eliza had no time to grieve, as they had to push on. Ten days later, the first storm descended and the last of their rations were distributed. Another member of the Willie handcart company, Joseph Elder, wrote: “It was at the commencement of the 16 mile drive without water that we gave out the last of the flour. ... we had not yet heard whether there was any help coming to meet us or not but we were determined to do all we could.” At noon that day, they met four express riders with the glad news that rescue wagons were not far behind. When they first saw these men coming, Joseph Elder said that “the Spirit of the Lord bore testimony that they were Saviors coming to [our] relief and it truly was.” The next morning, Captain Willie and Joseph Elder left the company to try to find the rescue party that they now knew was coming. They returned with the rescue wagons the next day, October 21.



Mary Ann Gadd
 (Rowley)

On October 23, Eliza’s family trekked across Rocky Ridge in a blizzard. Levi Savage wrote on that day: “We buried our dead, got up our teams and about nine o’clock a.m. commenced ascending Rocky Ridge. This was a severe day ... [the teams were] perfectly loaded down with the sick and children, so thickly stacked I was fearful some would smother.” Eliza struggled on with her little family, bearing an added burden as she became snow-blind. Eliza’s granddaughter, Mary Laws, wrote: “Mary Ann, with only rags covering her feet, led her snowblind mother for three days as she pulled the handcart. During this time she carried an ox hoof and at each camp she would roast it and eat the part that was roasted. This was all she had to eat during those three days.”

Just before daylight on October 24, the last of the Willie company reached Rock Creek. Ten-year-old Samuel Gadd joined his father and baby brother, Daniel, in death this day, leaving the Gadd family bereft of yet another member. Samuel was buried in a common grave at Rock Creek with the others who died there, including three other children. Levi Savage wrote, “Few tents were pitched, and men, women, and children sat shivering with cold around their small fires. ... It was certainly heart rending to hear children crying for mothers and mothers crying for children.” In Eliza’s biography, she said: “Of all [my] children, Samuel was the most anxious to reach Zion, but it was not to be.” The rest of this large family made it to Zion. Eliza was baptized or rebaptized one week after her arrival in Salt Lake. She was set apart and served as a successful midwife in the Nephi area.



This shoe belonged to Daniel Gadd, who was about 17 months old when he died on the journey.

Sources: Alfred Gadd diary; Levi Savage diary; Joseph Elder Journal; “Mary Ann Gadd Rowley” by her daughter, Mary Luella Rowley Laws. See more complete Gadd family history and artwork in *Follow Me To Zion* by Andrew Olsen and Jolene Allphin, Deseret Book, 2013.