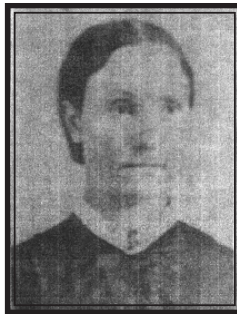


## ELIZABETH CROOK PANTING

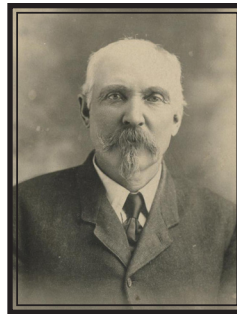
Born: 7 Oct 1827 England

Age: 28

Willie Handcart Company



Elizabeth about 1860



Christopher Panting



Jane Panting (Bell)

Elizabeth Crook was the second oldest of the 11 children of William and Margaret Lane Crook. She married Frederick Panting in England in 1848. Elizabeth apparently had two children, Sarah and Mary Ann, who died four days apart in May of 1852. Some records say she also had a baby, Mary Jane, who was born and died on the same day in January, 1851. Elizabeth also gave birth to twins, Christopher and Clara, in 1850. Clara died as an infant. A daughter, Jane, was born May 7, 1855. Thus, Elizabeth only brought two children with her as she sailed for America. Frederick Panting did not emigrate with his family.

Elizabeth had a brother, Samuel Lane Crook, traveling with her and the children. Samuel was married to Sarah Haines from Gloucestershire aboard the ship *Thornton* on May 29, 1856. We learn of this marriage from the diary of Peter Madsen:

This afternoon at 6 o'clock an English brother had a preparatory marriage which shall be repeated in the valley. The ship's quarterdeck was covered with the American flag. President Willie spoke about the importance of marriage and joined the pair together according to the rules given in the Doctrine and Covenants. After the wedding there was singing and cheers for the bridal pair, for the company, and for Captain Collins. He arose and expressed thanks for the honor and rejoiced over the festive occasion. He said he was an American citizen, that his forefathers for several generations had been, and that he had a legitimate right to such. If several pair wished to follow suit (in marriage) he would be pleased. He was answered with repeated cheers, which were likewise extended to the doctor who is held with respect by the company among whom are the English sisters who have given birth to three children. Samuel Crook from Apperlie, Gloucestershire, and Sarah Haines from Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, were married.

Samuel and Sarah did not continue with the Willie company but remained for a time on the East coast in Delaware. They continued their emigration to Utah in 1860 with their 3-year-old son. Elizabeth was probably very relieved at her escape from her own marriage. We learn from Elizabeth's son, Christopher, why his father did not emigrate with them:

My father was very much against the Mormons and threatened to kill my mother if she did not stay away from the Mormons. He used to hide her shoes so she couldn't go to church. She would have to borrow her neighbors shoes so she could go. He finally got so mean, she took her two children ... and left him. ... She got on a train ... but he followed her and she had to change clothes with another woman on the train so he would not recognize her.

Other children and grandchildren of Elizabeth also relay this story in their biographies, stating that Frederick Panting was a confirmed drunkard and mistreated Elizabeth continually. He resented her association with the Mormons and did threaten her life. However, Elizabeth was given a blessing, reportedly by Wilford Woodruff, in which he promised that she and her children would reach the Salt Lake Valley alive. Elizabeth had great faith to board a train for Liverpool. Elizabeth's son, Wilford Woodruff Cranney, was a fulfillment of that blessing. He wrote:

In 1856 my mother ... was converted to the Church in England by Wilford Woodruff and was given a blessing and promise by brother Woodruff that she would reach the church headquarters in safety with her children. She was leaving her husband under his threat that he would kill her if she did so. With fear allayed by Apostle Woodruff's blessing, she went from her home to Liverpool on the train. Her husband who was hunting for her followed her into the car where she was sitting with her children. ... However, he failed to recognize them and passed by them. He was a confirmed drunkard and mistreated her continuously. She boarded a sailing vessel at Liverpool in the company of emigrants and passed through many trials on the long journey to Zion. However, during the seventeen years that I lived under her influence before she died, I didn't hear her complain that she pulled a handcart ... to Salt Lake City. ... In 1856 she reached Salt Lake City with her little boy and girl tucked safely in the handcart even though many of their company had died on the way. ... This was a great testimony to her from which she never wavered.

One day while on the ocean voyage, Elizabeth discovered a fire on the ship. She told the captain and he asked her to please say nothing to any of the passengers as they might panic and

## (Elizabeth Crook Panting - Page 2)

cause trouble. Elizabeth accepted this direction, gathered her children close and prayed. After the fire was out, the captain came and told her that she was a very brave woman.

Elizabeth was privileged to experience another miracle during her journey to Zion. She told the story of this miracle to her daughter, Jane, repeatedly throughout her life. As Jane Panting (Bell) grew older she told this story to her children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Elizabeth Panting's granddaughter, June Cranney Monson, wrote:

"I can't remember when I first knew my Aunt Jane Bell, or when I first heard the story of Grandmother Cranney and her trek across the plains. As a child I remember being aware that Grandmother had been with the Willies handcart company and that she had suffered a great deal on the way to Salt Lake City.

"I remember hearing about Aunt Jane being so sick [lying in the handcart] and how Grandmother didn't dare stop to take care of her and she would just go on and call to her small son, Chris, and ask him if Jane was dead yet. I used to think about this and wonder how she could have stood it.

"When I was about fifteen, Aunt Jane came up to the ranch in Star Valley to visit us. She was such a little, quick, spunky character that I loved her very dearly. . . . While she was visiting us she told me the story of her Mother's experience on the plains. . . . Grandmother Cranney and the other members of the Willies handcart company were in terrible shape. The supplies had dwindled until nearly all of the people were starving. Grandmother was out gathering some buffalo chips to make a small fire to warm what little food that they had left for her children. She had on a long, full apron and had almost filled it with the buffalo chips. A man came up to her and talked to her and asked how the members of the company were. She told him that most of them were starving and he asked her to follow him and maybe he could help a little. Aunt Jane said that her mother shook out her apron and went with him. They went over a small hill and were out of sight of the camp. In the side of the hill was sort of a cave and he led Grandmother into the cave. On one side of the cave was a lot of dried buffalo meat hanging up.

"The man loaded as much meat in Grandmother's apron as she could carry and told her to share with the other people. Then he led her out of the cave and to the top of a small hill and pointed out the camp below and told her not to get lost. As Grandmother turned back to him to thank him after she had looked where he had pointed to the camp, he had disappeared. She looked for the cave and could find no trace of it, but she still had the dried meat. She went back to camp and divided the meat out to the ones that were in the most need and it saved many lives.

"Years later when Aunt Jane was an elderly woman, she was in Pocatello, Idaho, visiting her daughter. It was on Mother's Day and her daughter took her to church with her. I remember Aunt Jane said that she hesitated about going because she didn't want to take some other Mother's gift, since she didn't belong to that ward. . . . During this same program an elderly man got up to talk and he told of coming to Utah with his family when he was a small boy with the Willies handcart company and how they were starving and some sister in the company had received some dried meat in some miraculous way and had shared it and he was very grateful to that sweet sister.

"Aunt Jane said she cried when she heard this because so many people had made fun of her story of her mother's experience until she had almost come to doubt it herself. She talked to the gentleman and told him that she was a baby with that company and that it was her mother who had received the meat. She said that it was wonderful to have another witness of this wonderful experience."

CHILDREN OF ELIZABETH CROOK PANTING WILKES CRANNEY



Elizabeth married William Wilkes in 1859. They had two sons, Charles and William. She married Hiram K. Cranney in 1864 and they became the parents of seven children, five boys and two girls. They settled in Logan where Hiram was a High Priest, High Councilor, Probate Judge, Prosecuting Attorney, City Justice, Alderman, and Doctor. Elizabeth had a very busy and full life.

Elizabeth trusted in the Priesthood blessing given her by Elder Wilford Woodruff. In May, 1872, she gave birth to a son whom she named Wilford Woodruff Cranney. Elizabeth remained faithful throughout her life. She died on March 15, 1891, in Logan, Utah, at the age of 63.

Sources: Diary of Peter Madsen, Church archives; *The Family History of the Charles Morris Bell Family*, by B. Fay Byington, 1982; interviews by Jolene Allphin with June Cranney Monson; "My Grandmother's Journey from England to Utah," by Reta L. DeLo; <http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu.>; family histories based on Elizabeth's diary, location unknown; Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website. See movie, *17 Miracles*, 2011, by T.C. Christensen, for a wonderful portrayal of the Elizabeth Panting story.