



MARTHA WEBB CAMPKIN

Born: 1820 Littlington, Cambridgeshire, England

Age: 35

Willie handcart company

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Martha Webb was born on October 11, 1820, to DeGrasse and Mary Jackson Webb. She was the eighth of twelve children, six sons and six daughters. In 1847 she married a young boot and shoe maker, Isaac Campkin. In Isaac's shop, Martha sometimes assisted with the lining and binding of shoes and boots.

Martha and Isaac had six children. Their second child, Martha Rebecca, died of diphtheria in 1852 at the age of three. In 1844, Martha was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Isaac had been baptized in 1843. He became a traveling Elder, visiting nearby branches of the Church. Sometimes Martha accompanied him on these assignments. Family histories indicate that Martha was a "quiet, dressy little woman," and Isaac was a "genial, tall, good-looking man." He was "a good singer and a public speaker" and enjoyed hunting and outdoor sports. Although Martha didn't say much about her early life, she recalled Isaac as having a "jovial disposition and at times given to prank playing. Once he put a little water snake in her wash tub when she wasn't looking and awaited her reaction."

In mid-February 1856, the Campkin family boarded the ship *Caravan* in Liverpool, with plans to join the Saints in Utah. The Campkin children and their ages at that time were Wilford George (8), Francessa (4), Harriet (3), Martha Ann (2), and James (3 months). Isaac was 33 when they left England. Also traveling with the Campkin family was Thomas Young, age 20, and Elizabeth Smith, age 24. They were all traveling as "ordinary" passengers, meaning their passage was paid without borrowing. (See British Mission Record for ship *Caravan*.)

The family arrived at Castle Gardens in New York harbor on March 27, 1856. They remained there for four days after which some members of the company went to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, some to Iowa City, Iowa, and some stayed in New York. The Campkin family reportedly had loaned money to a man who was supposed to meet them in New York to pay them back, but he was not

there.<sup>1</sup> The family then traveled to St. Louis, Missouri, by train, perhaps to work and earn enough money to continue their journey to Utah. Thomas Young went with the Campkin family to St. Louis, arriving on April 5, 1856.<sup>2</sup>

Before leaving England, Isaac Campkin had suffered from Smallpox. His daughter, Martha Ann, reported that her father had never fully recovered from this illness. Isaac then contracted pneumonia a short time after his arrival in St. Louis and passed away on May 12, 1856. After only about 6 weeks in America, Martha found herself a widow and her small children fatherless. Isaac had brought some of his guns with him to America. If he had lived to cross the plains with his family, his hunting skills would have been most helpful in their time of need.

In Thomas Young's autobiography, he wrote, "[Martha's] husband died of pneumonia while we were in St. Louis, leaving her with five small children to care for. Before he died he asked me if I would see they reached their destination." Thomas contracted to drive a wagon and ox team for Abraham O. Smoot, whose wagon company was also traveling to Utah at that time.<sup>3</sup> From St. Louis, Thomas and the Campkin family traveled to Florence, Nebraska, arriving about the same time as the Willie handcart company who had traveled from Iowa City, Iowa. Perpetual Emigrating Fund records show that Martha was issued a bond at Florence, so she could continue her journey to Utah.

Besides the money, Martha desperately needed help with her small children. In addition to Thomas's help, two young sisters stepped forward to offer assistance. Their names were Emily and Julia Hill. No doubt Martha was brought into their circle of service as if she were their own sister. Emily Hill later wrote the words to the hymn *As Sisters in Zion*.

Thomas Young wrote of some of their experiences: "We came in the Captain James Willie Company. ... We had many thrilling experiences crossing the plains, and some that made it very hard for our company. One was the [loss of] our beef cattle. There was an extremely early winter that year and no one had warm enough clothing nor enough bedding to keep warm. The handcarts were so rickety that it took rawhide a plenty to tie them together. The provisions were so low that on October 12 every one was rationed out with ten ounces of flour. On the nineteenth [of October] the snow began to fall ... We pushed on as far as we could. ... [When] Brigham Young learned of [us] in the October conference[,] he dismissed the conference and sent twenty wagons, each with two teamsters, provisions, quilts and all kinds of supplies that had been volunteered to aid our

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<sup>1</sup> This man may have been James Pace. Someone by this name paid the balance due on Martha's PEF bond which she obtained at Florence, Nebraska. This bond was closed and Martha sent a receipt in 1868. The Perpetual Emigrating Fund ledger shows that Martha and her children were issued a PEF Bond at Florence, Nebraska, having arrived there from St. Louis, Missouri. The amount transferred to their account from the "transportation book" was \$25.00 for each family member—a total of \$125.00. A note in their PEF account says of Martha: "She was aided some by the Wagons under [Daniel or Claudious] Spencer's direction &c[.] The Wagons & Cattle were a great loss[.] This charge I think right." The Bond record also shows a payment of \$60.00 with this note: "Nov. 27/68. This amount is supposed to be included in the \$145.50 Note given by James Pace (see B.R. No. 419) & which is paid." The bond then shows it is closed by this \$60.00 payment with this note: "Receipt issued to that effect this 27<sup>th</sup> day of November 1868."

<sup>2</sup> The author does not know what happened to Elizabeth Smith who was traveling with the Campkin family.

<sup>3</sup> Although the Smoot company arrived in Salt Lake the same day as the Willie handcart company (Nov. 9, 1856), the two companies were never traveling together. For most of the journey, the Smoot wagon company was ahead of the Willie company.

company and others who were on the plains. . . . Help came just in time; we had had nothing to eat for forty-eight hours.”

Thomas Young, with Martha Campkin and her little ones, arrived safely in Salt Lake City on November 9, 1856. Thomas went to work for awhile, then married Martha on New Year’s Day 1857. Martha and Thomas settled on a farm near Brigham City, Utah, in 1864. The area was first known as Three Mile Creek. It is now Perry, Utah.

Martha and Thomas had three children. Their first was born in 1859. Her name was Fanny Young. She married Henry Morgan Perry in 1881 and they had 10 children. Their son, Leslie Thomas Perry became the grandfather of Apostle L. Tom Perry (1922-2015).

Martha Campkin was a courageous and faithful Saint in bringing her family to Utah. She did so while suffering great adversity, but with the help of kind friends. Martha Campkin Young raised up a numerous and righteous posterity in latter-day Zion.

Sources: familysearch.org; Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; family stories from Ida Young Thorne, Martha A. Merrell, Clarice Y. Whitesides, and Keith Young (see <http://www.youngzones.org/~nkyoung/IsaacCampkinHistory.html>); Perpetual Emigrating Fund, Financial Accounts 1849-1886, Ledger B, p. 270; British Mission Record for ship *Caravan*, 1856, pg. 45 (see <https://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/mii/passenger/7533?mii=on&scandinavia=on&europe=on&sweden=on&keyw=Martha+campkin&netherlands=on>); autobiography of Thomas Young (see [http://www.tellmystorytoo.com/member\\_pdfs/thomas-young\\_2028\\_413.pdf](http://www.tellmystorytoo.com/member_pdfs/thomas-young_2028_413.pdf)); Perry, Lee Tom, *L. Tom Perry, An Uncommon Life: Years of Preparation, 1922-1976*, Deseret Book, 2013; records of sisters Emily and Julia Hill of the Willie handcart company (see source information at [http://www.tellmystorytoo.com/member\\_pdfs/julia-hill\\_1691\\_394.pdf](http://www.tellmystorytoo.com/member_pdfs/julia-hill_1691_394.pdf) and [http://www.tellmystorytoo.com/member\\_pdfs/emily-hill\\_1690\\_393.pdf](http://www.tellmystorytoo.com/member_pdfs/emily-hill_1690_393.pdf)); LDS Hymnal, Hymn 309.

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