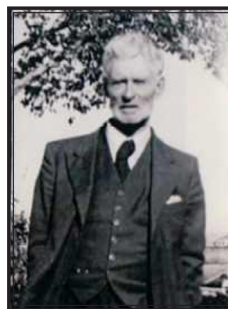


## JAMES REID

Born: 12 Jan 1816 Scotland

Age: 40

McArthur and Willie Handcart Companies



James and Elizabeth Cummings Reid

It seems that James Reid was destined for bad luck in 1856. Full of hope and the spirit of gathering, he brought his family from Scotland to England, where they sailed on the ship *Enoch Train* with other emigrating Saints on March 22, 1856. Elder James Ferguson presided over the Saints on board the ship and Daniel Duncan McArthur, newly released President of the Dundee Mission, was returning to Utah with them.

The Reid family at this time consisted of James, a skilled and noted shoemaker, his wife, Elizabeth Cummings (age 32), daughters, Elizabeth (11) and Mary (3), and sons, James, Jr. (6) and John (16 months). After arriving at the terminus of the railroad in Iowa City, Iowa, the Reid family prepared their handcarts and tents to travel with the Daniel D. McArthur handcart company. They left Iowa City on June 11 with a company of about 500 Saints and soon arrived at Florence, Nebraska, 300 miles away. From here the company would strike out across the wilderness 1,000 more miles to the Salt Lake Valley.

During the time this company camped at Florence, James Reid's identity was mistaken by a man named Kimball, for another man who was about the same build and height. Kimball pulled out a pistol and shot James in the hip. Fellow traveler, Patrick Twiss Bermingham, recorded it this way: "Wednesday, July 16. [1856] Brother Reid was shot in the leg by a Gentile." The Reid family then was forced to lay over in Florence until James could travel. They elected to continue their journey with the Willie handcart company which arrived on August 11 and departed Florence on August 18, 1856. The time spent recuperating from the gunshot wound put the Reid family at their destination about two months later than the McArthur Company.

Within a month, the company began to experience frosty nights along the North Platte River which they followed. Food became short and rationing began the first week of October. The days were very warm until about the middle of October when food was all but gone and early winter storms descended on the company. One night young Elizabeth was attempting to get water from a stream where a hole had been cut in the ice. She slipped and fell through the ice. She was rescued by William Kimball, who was leading the Willie company after being found on October 21. Her parents worked with her all night, taking turns warming blankets over the campfire to keep her alive and as comfortable as possible. The exposure cost Elizabeth her two big toes and James had his fingers badly frozen. When the snow became too deep for James to trudge through with his bad hip, he was placed on a handcart to ride.

Before the rescuers came with food and assistance, the Reid family had shaken out their flour sacks several times in order to make a thin gruel for the children. Desperately needed bedding and other items prepared in Scotland was left along the trail in order to lighten their loads and speed them on their way.

Sister Reid often spoke of one day when she was impressed to put the kettle on the hook above the fire. Several people in camp came to her saying, "Oh, Sister Reid, have you something to eat?" She replied, "No, I haven't anything yet, but when the kettle boils, I think something will be here." Elizabeth reported that soon after making this statement "we saw a rider coming away off in the distance. He came with enough food to save the starving souls so that they would not get sick—just enough to stay their hunger until the wagons came."

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By this time, Sister Reid was so weak and malnourished, that when she nursed her infant son, she would faint. The baby nursed blood instead of milk.

The main rescue party finally met the Willie company and brought them back over the Rocky Ridge to their camp at Rock Creek on the 23rd of October. Little Mary turned four years old on this day, probably riding much of the way in the handcart, with a blizzard for a birthday present. The Willie company buried 13 people in a common grave at Rock Creek the next morning. Mary became ill with “mountain fever” about this time.

Due to their suffering and injuries, James was not able to work for many months. When they arrived in Salt Lake City, the family was cared for by James’s mother and step-father, James and Mary Murray Reid Muir, who had arrived in the Valley in 1853. Little Mary always remembered this arrival. As she was lifted from the wagon and placed into Grandfather Muir’s arms, she collapsed into unconsciousness and was ill for several weeks. She remembered opening her eyes one morning to see her little brother, John, eating a big slice of bread and jelly. She cried for some but was too ill to eat it. Her Grandmother Muir said, “Mary, you can have a whole loaf as soon as you are well enough to eat it.” When the family moved into their first little one-room cabin, Elizabeth said, “No Queen was ever more proud of her palace.”

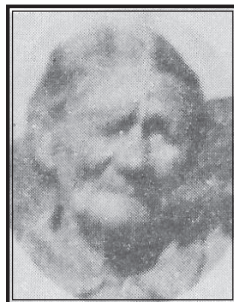
The Reid family survived to reach their Zion in the Rocky Mountains. Two more baby girls, Margaret Ann and Isabell, were born to James and Elizabeth in 1860 and 1862, and a son, Robert, was born in 1867.

James Reid lived to be 70 years old. He died in Smithfield, Cache County, Utah, in 1886 on his birthday. Elizabeth lived another 24 years. She died at her daughter’s home in Idaho



Elizabeth Cummings Reid  
in the snow

Sources: “The Reids Come To America,” personal histories (unpublished) by Mable A. Peterson, Margaret Moss, Elizabeth Reid, and others, compiled by Quenalee Nelson, February 2006; familysearch.org; Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website, McArthur Handcart Company sources; Birmingham, Twiss, “To Utah--By Hand,” *American Legion Magazine*, July 1937, 27, 58-61: (16TH JULY: Brother Reid shot in the leg by a “Gentile.”); familysearch.org.



Elizabeth Reid  
(Robert Smith) (George Smith)



Mary Reid (Lindsay)



John Cummings Reid