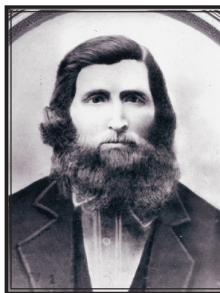


## LUCY WARD

Born: 1 May 1833

Age: 23

Willie Handcart Company



James Barnett and Lucy Ward Cole

Lucy was born in London, England, of well-to-do parents: Alfred George and Elizabeth Forth Ward. Most of her youth was spent in Nottingham, where her sister and two brothers were born. The family later moved back to London. Lucy was accustomed to servants and tutors in her childhood home. Lucy had a superior education, was an excellent seamstress, and was taught the millinery skills of her family as well. She was taught to appreciate fine linens and china and to be a proper lady in every way.

Lucy's father died when she was about fourteen years old. A few years after his death, her mother, a sister, and two brothers joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Lucy was also baptized a member in 1851. In the following few years, Lucy's mother and sister died and her two brothers married. Being fully converted to the Church, Lucy decided to gather with the Sints in Utah. She left England when she was twenty-two years old: "Wed. 12. [Dec. 1855] -- The ship *John J. Boyd* sailed from Liverpool, England, with 508 Saints (437 Scandinavians, 41 British and 41 Italians), under the direction of Knud Peterson. It arrived at New York, Feb. 15, 1856. A part of the company remained in Iowa and Illinois for some time, while a portion continued to Utah the same season via St. Louis and Florence [Nebraska]."

Lucy spent her first winter in America working in New York City as a milliner to save money in order to outfit herself for the long journey to Zion. She had to leave many of her precious belongings behind because the handcarts held very little. She joined the Willie handcart company in Iowa City in 1856. Because of the many delays in outfitting and other reasons, the company got off to a late start. Lucy had taken her fur jacket and made herself some warm fur moccasins, a muff, and a hat which she tied on her head with a green mantilla or scarf.<sup>1</sup> Still, her feet were badly frozen before the company was found by rescuers and her journey was through.

On October 19th, express riders met the Willie company near a place called *Ice Springs* with the reassuring information that rescue wagons were not far behind. The company pushed on to the 6th crossing of the Sweetwater. That night it snowed several inches. All the food in camp was gone and the promised rescue wagons had not arrived. Captain James Willie and Joseph Elder left their stranded camp to go in search of the rescuers the morning of October 20th. Millen Atwood was left in charge of the camp. There were many who were too sick to walk, and in the wagons that could not move further without help. Many of the cattle had given out and died.

According to Lucy's biography by her granddaughters, she told them that after Captain Willie and Joseph Elder left, Millen Atwood decided it would be best to push as many as could travel on through the snow, hoping to reach those who would have food to share. After going about 10 miles, they simply couldn't travel any further. Lucy's biography states: "Captain Atwood took over and tried to push on with the company but they were just too weak. They settled in their tracks. This camp was then two miles below Rock Ridge on the Sweet Water."

The next day, October 21st, Captain Willie returned with the rescue wagons. Lucy was surely grateful to finally have something to eat, but this day also produced a love story that Lucy told her children and grandchildren throughout her life:

James Barnet Cole joined the first rescue party as it came through Ft. Bridger, or he may have been in Salt Lake City when the first of many rescue calls was issued. He was traveling with William H. Kimball. One night, while on his way, James dreamed he would meet his future wife with the stranded Saints. He even was shown what she looked like. She had a fur cap and a green veil tied over her cap to keep the wind off, and she was very beautiful. He told his dream to his friend and fellow rescuer, William Kimball, who remarked, "We will see no beautiful girl with a fur cap and a green veil in these frozen Saints."

## (Lucy Ward - Page 2)

James Cole said that when they saw the stranded Willie encampment, it looked like an eskimo village. The snow was quite deep and paths had been made from tent to tent. When the people caught sight of the train coming, many shouted and cried and embraced their deliverers. Lucy, however, with her very proper upbringing and ingrained ladylike habits, must have been a little more reserved. As they drove into the camp, William Kimball caught sight of Lucy Ward in her green veil. He drove up to her and said to James Cole, “Brother Jim, there is your dream girl.” James asked Lucy if she wanted to get in the wagon, but Lucy’s reply was, “No, I don’t know you.”

Another incident that shows Lucy’s penchant for propriety occurred earlier when a “fine old man” in camp asked Lucy to wash his clothes. Lucy had just pulled this man’s handcart across the Platte River and then gone back to bring her own. She didn’t refuse his request, but went to her tent to pray about the matter. Before leaving England, Lucy had never even washed her own clothes. “She prayed for strength of character, enough courage to do as she was asked. ... When she went out of the tent she felt almost happy about the prospect, knowing that faith without works is dead. The next night the man died. She was so happy she had washed his clothing. He was buried in them.”

At the time of rescue, Lucy was taken into the care of William Kimball, James Cole, and other rescuers. She must have gotten used to the idea of having James around, and James must have been quite persuasive in winning her heart, because on the way to Salt Lake, on November 2, 1856, they were married at Fort Bridger by William Kimball. Lucy and James stayed at Fort Bridger and nearby Fort Supply during the winter. James had two brothers who were also at Fort Supply— John and Moroni Cole. Lucy was nursed back to health and her feet were saved. Lucy and James came into the Valley the next spring and went to Willard, Utah, to help James’s father run his flour mill.

Brigham Young soon called upon the Cole family to move around Utah colonizing various new communities. Lucy remarked that they would no sooner become comfortable, than they would leave to start all over again in some wilderness. This was common to many families of that time, particularly the hardy handcart pioneers who had already conquered great obstacles.

Lucy and James eventually had eleven children, eight girls and three boys. In June, 1876, James was killed as a result of an accident with a runaway horse on a mowing machine. Lucy’s last baby, Edith, was only four months old. Lucy went to Ogden to live with her daughter, Artemisia, who provided a home for her until her death in 1920. She was 86 years old when she died, having been a widow for 44 years.

At one point Lucy became blind from cataracts, but she continued to find ways to be helpful. She hemmed tablecloths and napkins with exquisitely tiny stitches. She helped her grandchildren with their homework. They said “her mind was like a dictionary.” One particular granddaughter, Ruby Hall, wrote of her: “I think the rudeness of us children was a trial to her. We would talk loud with our mouths full, and kept the floor, so to speak, when someone else had something to say worthwhile. ... She would stand at her full height (five feet) like a princess and say ‘HARK!’ and we would all listen to what she had to say. ... If she was ever annoyed with us, we never knew it. She was sweet and loving all the time. We all just thought her wonderful, as she was. She never got out of place or put her foot in her mouth, so to speak.”

In her widowhood, Lucy worked as a companion to older women. She read to them and wrote letters for them as part of their care. Ruby wrote, “She was James Barnet Cole’s wonderful companion given to him from divine providence. And they were both our darling mother’s parents. ... By their fruits they shall be known. [She] died on February 18, 1920. I lived with her twenty years and to know her was to love her.”

Sources: “Lucy Ward’s Story,” by Isabell May Tinsley Johnson; “Story of Lucy Ward,” by Ruby M.F. Hall, granddaughter; Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; Mormon Migration website for the *John J. Boyd*; Diary of Patience Loader.

<sup>1</sup>Patience Loader of the Martin handcart company mentioned being in New York with Lucy. They had sailed from England on the same ship. Patience Loader worked in a business where these “mantillas” were made. Lucy may have worked at the same place, and made her fur clothing there.