

# Eliza Rosannah Pears Summers

[by Essie Eliza Summers Clifford, granddaughter]

Eliza Rosanna Pears was the daughter of John Pears and Rosanna Whitehead Pears. She was born February 5, 1842, at Bedford, Yorkshire, England. We have a record of her joining the Latter-day Saint Church and being baptized in England on January 11, 1853. She left England with her father, mother and one sister, Margaret. They brought quite a lot of personal belongings, including bolts of silk and woolen goods – enough that they thought it would keep them in clothes for years, as they were owners of large silk and woolen mills. It was while working in these mills that Eliza lost her fourth finger. It took twelve weeks by boat to get to New York from England. Then they were put on cattle cars and sent to Iowa City, Iowa, where they got some oxen, wagons, and hand carts to make the journey to Salt lake City. Eliza and her parents went with the Martin Handcart Company to cross the plains in 1856 (Mr. Martin was Captain of the Company, thus we get the Martin Handcart Company). Her father died of exposure to cold and was buried with five other men. Brush was heaped on the grave and burned to keep the wolves from digging up the bodies. Her mother's feet were frozen so badly that she was crippled and put into a handcart that Eliza pulled all the way to Salt lake City. The oxen pulled the wagons until they dropped dead, then all the Pioneers would yell "Beef" and the oxen was eaten. Many days they lived on the hide frizzled over the campfire. They also had stewed crow meat, and before the snow came, they picked weeds and ate them. They even cleaned the entrails of the oxen and ate them to sustain life. They gathered buffalo chips for fuel for fire. Mr. Martin was very friendly with the Indians, so his company wasn't molested by them until one man killed a squaw. The Indians came at once and demanded the young man that killed the squaw. They made known to Mr. Martin that if he didn't give the man to them, they would kill the entire company. So the man was given to the Indians, and he was tied to a wagon wheel and scalped. Winter began very early, and had it not been that Brigham Young sent help to them in Parley's Canyon, they would have all perished. Many of them suffered frozen feet. The winter was very severe when they arrived in Salt lake City. Eliza's mother was not able to walk, but lived to complete her journey and reach Salt lake City. She resided with Eliza at Sugar House until her death, about 1863. Mr. Richardson had converted them to the Gospel and started them out too late in the fall to be able to make the trip before winter came. He painted the picture so beautiful that they lost faith in the missionaries. Eliza always felt that he misrepresented the United States of America to them as they could have come in the summer when the weather was warm. On this account she always felt that Mr. Richardson was a

swindler and had brought them at that time of year so he could get their belongings. When they arrived in Salt Lake, the bolts of silk and woolen were never found, and she suspected Mr. Richardson had taken them for his own use. Eliza Pears married Nicholas Summers on January 2, 1857, in Sugar house Ward, Salt Lake City, Utah. To this union was born one son, John Charles, and three daughters, Sarah Ann Summers Morrison, Rosanna Summers Bair, and Elizabeth Summers Van Doozer. Eliza had a very hard life, as Nicholas died on May 29, 1865, leaving her a widow with four small children, the oldest only seven years of age. She was only sixteen years old when her first child was born. While a widow, she worked wherever she could to provide for herself and family. She was very ambitious and a hard worker. No one ever left her door hungry. She later married Timothy O'Neil in Uintah, Utah. He was a railroad worker with a team of horses, and she cooked for the men working on the Union Pacific Railroad to help support her family. She owned a 15-acre farm, raising some fruit, berries, and hay at Uintah, Utah north of Ogden. She raised a granddaughter, Adaline Morrison, and a grandson, Charles Summers. It was while helping to load fruit crates on wagons for market, that she was injured. A crate fell, striking her on the breast. She did not complain for some time, but the pain became unbearable, and when neighbors sent for her son, John Charles, who at this time resided on a homestead in Burton, Idaho, he went immediately. Doctors diagnosed the case as "cancer" for which treatment was started at once. X-Ray was used, then an operation, but it was not successful. Eliza had always hoped that some day she would get a share of the silk and woolen mills in England, but it never came. She was re-baptized on May 2, 1909, in Uintah, Utah, by Heber Fernelius, and confirmed that same day by Alma Keys. She died August 5, 1909, at Uintah, Utah, and was buried in the Uintah Cemetery. She was survived by her son, John Charles Summers of Burton, Idaho; one daughter, Elizabeth Summers Van Doozer of Portland, Oregon, and 13 grandchildren. Two daughters, Sarah Ann Summers Morrison, and Rosanna Summers Bair, preceded her in death. Written by her Granddaughter, Essie Eliza Summers Clifford, daughter of John Charles Summers. [After more research, the following information was added by a great-granddaughter, Bernice Hazel Clifford Kauer, daughter of Essie Eliza Summers Clifford]: Microfilm Number 298,442 – Crossing the Plains, lists Pears, Eliza (19) Sailed on Ship "Horizon" May 25, 1856. Eliza Pears came to Utah with the Martin Handcart Company. There were 576 persons 146 Handcarts, 7 Wagons. Left Iowa City July 28, 1856. Left Florence, Nebraska Aug. 27, 1856, and arrived in Salt Lake City November 30, 1856.