

## ELIZABETH GEORGIANA QUILLEY READ

Born: 1805 England

Age: 51

Martin Handcart Company



Elizabeth was an intelligent, gracious, ambitious person. When she heard the Gospel of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she and all except her youngest child were baptized. She left England with her husband, Samuel George, and children, Alicia (age 15), Samuel M. (14), Thisbe (11) and Walter (7). The oldest daughter, Clara (17), apparently did not come with them. The Reads were a wealthy family. When they left England they stored or sold their goods and many possessions. Elizabeth used some of this money to invest in medicine and first aid equipment to take with her, as she was gifted in taking care of the sick. She tucked some medical supplies and herbs in every corner of her handcart, and also kept a few dry twigs and grass to readily start a fire. Her medical knowledge assisted her family as well as the other members of the company.

On August 8, young Walter wandered away from camp and took a ride with some strangers. When he was missed, the father and oldest son stayed behind to hunt for him. Elizabeth went on ahead, pulling the handcart. Her two daughters, Alicia and Thisbe, pushed from behind. Their handcart company suffered terribly by being caught in early snow without ample food and clothing. Elizabeth was called upon to help relieve what suffering she could. After the first group of rescuers found the Martin company, there were two prophecies made in the company that were fulfilled. Fresh meat had been promised the famished group and they were promised they would ride into the Valley. Soon, Ephraim Hanks rode into camp leading two horses with great pieces of buffalo hung on each side of the animals. They thought he was an angel. Six years later, Thisbe married this “angel.” Both prophecies were fulfilled as these people rode into the valley on November 30.

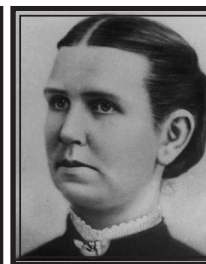
Elizabeth worked for Brigham Young as a nurse and helper in his household and did nursing throughout the Valley. While here, Alicia met and married Orson P. Arnold. They first lived in Pioneer Fort and later had a beautiful home on a large piece of ground. Alicia was noted for her hospitality. The front room of her home had a secret room built under it with a trap door under the dining room table for access. This room was a hiding place for those who were being persecuted.

In 1858, Elizabeth and her daughter, Thisbe, went back across the plains and found her husband had fallen in love with a widow. Heartbroken, she agreed to give him a divorce and he was to try one more time to locate their son. Three years later, after Walter had been found, Elizabeth and Thisbe made their third trip across the Plains. Walter and his mother and sister drove an ox team to Salt Lake City. In January of 1863, Elizabeth married John Rodwell, who had also been in the Martin company. They lived in Nephi. Elizabeth delivered babies and nursed the sick for many years as the only doctor there.

Elizabeth testified in a letter to her children in England: “My dear children, we have suffered beyond anything you can imagine. We have seen our comrades weaken and die and be buried in trenches of snow. But in all this suffering we have come face to face with God. It was God who upheld us when our weary bodies would have given up the ghost. It was God who preserved Thisbe to us when it seemed that she would never live. Yes, my children, for the first time in my life I know God. I know that He hears our prayers, and that in his wisdom all is for the best.”

Sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneer history files; *The Tempered Wind: The Life Story of Thisbe Read Hanks*, by Sidney Alvarus Hanks, 1956; research files of Joanne Mellor Felix. (Elder Mervyn B. Arnold Of the Seventy is a descendant of Alicia Q. Read Arnold and General Authority of the Church. He spoke of rescuing in an April 2016 General Conference:

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2016/04/to-the-rescue-we-can-do-it?lang=eng>)

Alicia Quilley  
Read (Arnold)Thisbe Quilley  
Read (Hanks)