



SARAH EMILY WALL

Born: February 7, 1840 in England

Age: 16

Willie Handcart Company

Sarah Emily (or Emily, as she was called) was the second oldest child in a family of nine. Her parents were William and Sarah Sansom Wall. Emily, her brother, Joseph Laban, and her parents were baptized and confirmed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on October 29, 1849. They wanted to emigrate to America, but they could not afford to send the whole family at once, so they sent the two oldest children first.

Emily and her brother, Joseph (17), traveled to America on the ship *Thornton*. They were traveling with Elder Millen Atwood, a returning missionary who became a sub-captain in the Willie handcart company. Apostle Orson Hyde, who was staying in the Wall home, gave Emily and Joseph a blessing before they left England. He promised them that if they were true and faithful and obeyed the counsel of those in authority over them, they would arrive in Zion in safety. They started out for Utah well prepared to make the journey on foot, as their mother had purchased 15 pairs of shoes for each of them. When the point was reached that the company could not carry so much, Joseph and Emily discarded part of their clothing, giving to those who were not as fortunate.

At one of the river crossings, Joseph nearly drowned. He was rescued by the hair of the head when he was going down the third time. He became ill with pneumonia. Emily pulled him in the handcart, but he grew worse each day. Finally the company stopped for a time to allow him to recover, but he didn't. Those in authority said they would have to leave him behind to be picked up or buried by the next company. Emily said that she would not go on without her brother, and she would stay behind as well.

The company moved on, but after traveling three miles out, one of the captains decided to go back for them. Emily promised to pull her brother on her cart if he would be permitted to come. Consent was given, and with the aid of a young girl, Emily pushed and pulled her brother in the handcart for many days.

One night when they were caught in a blizzard, Joseph slept between two men who froze to death during the night. He was saved by the warmth of their bodies. He did have a frozen toe.

Emily eventually became acquainted a 19-year-old printer by the name of William M. Cowley. In conversation with her, he asked if some day she would marry him. Emily said she didn't know and told him he would have to write to England and get permission from her mother. After being informed that a letter had been written to her mother and that an answer had come saying it was all right for them to be married, provided he was a good man, Emily consented and they were married in 1860. They became the parents of 13 children. One of the children died at the age of two.

Joseph regained his health after their arrival. He was sent to Manti, Utah, where he learned to lay stone and build houses of fine rock. He lived in Manti for five years, then settled in Sevier County. Joseph married Selina Doel Stevens and they had 5 children. All but one preceded them in death. Three of those were infants. Joseph said, "I came to Utah because of my religion and wanted to settle where, in my life, I could do the most good and build up the homes of the Saints, help make this a good place to live and raise families."

Sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; "Joseph Laban Wall: Pioneer and Settler in Glenwood, Sevier, Utah," by Dora C. Gurr; familysearch.org.