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John Savilaakso Saline
Willie Handcart Rescue Party 1856

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John Saline born October 24, 1831, Oulu, Oulu, Finland.

While still a very young boy, John was sent to a boarding school in Sweden, where he was well educated. He learned to speak five languages fluently. The main textbook was The Bible, which he always loved to read and expound.

In order to enter this Swedish school, he was required to adopt a Swedish name so he changed his name from Savilaakso to Selin and upon coming to America, changed it to Saline.

When 16, went to sea with his brother, who was captain of a ship. 5 years later, he sailed to America.

On this ship were two Mormon Elders. They presented the gospel to him and along with a few others, they were baptized aboard the ship, and became members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

In 1853, after reaching the United States, he became an Ox team driver and crossed the plains with some of the saints.

He settled in Fort Union (Salt Lake), worked many different jobs. His work consisted mostly of farming, making adobes, helping build houses, and digging on a large canal to be used to float granite rocks down to Salt Lake City for the great Temple.

He was a fine skater and dancer. He could write his name on ice and do all kinds of fancy skating. He loved to dance and won many prizes. He also taught others to dance.

When Brigham Young called for able young men for team drivers to go on the rescue of the the handcart companies in 1856, John knew he must go. With his experience as a team driver, he was eager to volunteer as a rescuer. He was with one of the later teams to leave Salt Lake with supplies.

On the evening of Oct [November] 4th, John met some of the Willie Hand Cart Company at the East end of Echo Canyon. John asked if there were any stragglers left behind and was told

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there were not. Then an old lady who could not speak English told him about the mother, the three girls, and another woman traveling with them, were back a ways on the trail. John Saline could speak five languages fluently, so he was able to communicate with her. She said, that Rebecca Osborn, and another woman were too ill to travel on with the rest, so they, and the three little Osborn girls were left behind, with a promise that someone would return for them later. He then went and found them all huddled together, nearly frozen in the snow. He gave them food, and put them in his wagon. The Osborn girls were badly frozen.

The next day, Wednesday, November 5, sadly Susanna Rebecca Tillet Osborn age 33, and the other woman had died. This left the three Osborn girls orphans.

Prior to this on Oct 19, the son, Daniel Osborn age 8, died on the trek.

7 [13] days later, November 1st the father Daniel Osborn age 35,died.

All three Osborn's who died, were buried in Unmarked graves along the trail.

The three little Osborn orphan girls, reached Salt Lake City on 9 November 1856 with help from their rescuer John Saline. They were turned over to Bishop Hunter who asked Bishop Salas Richards of Fort Union to take these three sisters and raise them as his own. Bishop Richards wrote of them in his diary, "*The Children are very poor with suffering from cold and hunger and warrant of proper nourishment and clothing. None were able to walk across the room without difficulty. Susanna's feet were badly frost bitten. Their only clothing, being some raiment of summer apparel. They had no shoes or woolen stockings; they were very feeble and required much care and attention. Young Susanna had to keep oiled rags between her toes to prevent them from growing together.*" For the rest of Susanna's life she had serious health problems particularly with her feet.

(John Saline's name is on the Rescue Monument at Devils Gate, Martin Cove.)

About a year later, the second oldest girl, Sarah Ann, age 5 passed away in 1857, from complications of their ordeal, leaving only two of the family of six, who had left England a short time before. Sarah Ann was buried at the small Union Fort Cemetery In Salt Lake City.

(There is a small grave stone there that some of the family had put up in recent years.)

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Susanna was then about twelve and the baby, Martha Ann, was three years old.

Susanna grew up, and at age sixteen, six years later, married John Saline, her rescuer. The wedding was a big affair, which took place at a dance at Fort Union on the 12th February 1862.

John and Susanna lived in several towns in Utah. He took part in the Black Hawk Indian War. When in 1880, President Young asked him to go on a mission to help colonize the Gila Valley in Pima, Arizona, where they raised their 11 children and lived the rest of their days.

Martha Osborn married Elijah John Elmer on 11 July 1877 at the St. George, Utah Temple. They also settled in the Gila Valley in Pima, Arizona. They never had any children.

John Saline died July 3, 1896 Long Beach, California, taken back by train to Pima, Arizona to be buried.