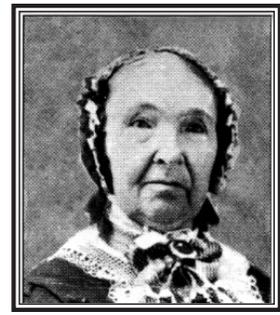


ANN JEWELL ROWLEY

Born: 1807 England

Age: 48

Willie Handcart Company



The Rowley family children were brought to Zion by their courageous, 48-year-old widowed mother, Ann Jewell Rowley. Her husband, William, had died in 1848, partly from the effects of persecution after he joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Ann's children traveling with her were Louisa (age 18), Elizabeth (16), John (14), Samuel (12), Richard (11), Thomas (10), and Jane (7). Her stepdaughter, Eliza Rowley (32), also came with her. The family all made it to Zion with the exception of Eliza, who died at the "Fifth Crossing" of the Sweetwater River on October 19, 1856. This was the day the winter storms began and the Willie company, severely weakened, and out of provisions, had come to a grinding halt to await a rescue. It was also Eliza's 33rd birthday. Eliza was spared the tortuous trek over Rocky Ridge that the rest of her family had to face only four days after her death.¹ The following excerpts from Ann's biography tell a little of her life and faith, and reasons for leaving her home in England:

"I married William Rowley 22 Aug 1836. I was 29 years old at the time. ... William was a widower with 7 children. I was considered an old maid. I was uneducated, but an excellent seamstress. I sewed for my wealthy sister, making her gowns and draperies. William was 50 years old, but I loved him, this great man and his children. I thought I had made a good catch. He was fairly well-to-do. He had a beautiful home in a place called 'Mars Hill,' in the Parish of Buckley, Worchestershire, England. We made our living selling 'Hops and Fruits.' We were members of a religious body called the 'United Brethren.' There was more than 600 of us. ... We were continually praying for light and truth.

"Before our first child was born, we were privileged to hear a man named Wilford Woodruff proclaim a new gospel message. We really went to hear this man because we were curious and because we had heard that the Church of England had sent a constable to arrest him, but this man had converted him instead. Then the church sent two spies who were commissioned to set in on the meetings and report back. They too were converted, so the church dared not send anyone else. We all wanted to hear this astonishing man. We had only to hear him once and William and I knew with all our hearts that he was offering us a priceless treasure. We accepted his offer and were baptized into the 'Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.' All but one of the 600 members of the United Brethren were converted and baptized at the time. ...

"We dreamed of going to Zion, where we could be with the main body of the Saints, but money was the problem here too. ... William was never to see Zion ... he died when Jane was 6 months old [February 14, 1848]. I was left a widow with 7 children under 12 years of age and the stepchildren of William's first marriage. I was very grateful for the gospel of Jesus Christ and the comfort it gave me. I knew that our parting was only temporary and that viewed from the eternities, this was but a fleeting moment. I also knew that no matter how fleeting a moment it was, I had to make the best of it. I had a very real job to do. The children had to be fed and clothed, but the big task and the one I must accomplish, is to get us all to Zion. I must be among the people of my faith and I must get the Temple work done for us. Each person that could earn money at all, was required to work. ... Samuel was only 7 and John 9, but they worked in a brick yard tramping mud, to be used for bricks. I would help the little fellows across a narrow dangerous bridge to go to work at daylight and at night I would meet them and help them home. The girls, even 11 year old Elizabeth, worked late in the night making kid gloves, doing mock frocking and other needlework. We did this in our home. Then at the end of the week, I would take them to market where they were sold to the gentry. Our savings were meager [but] with the perpetual aid fund, we were able to book passage. ... Only one of my stepchildren sailed with us, Eliza, a sweet girl, with very frail health. ...



Samuel Rowley

"We were delayed in Iowa City. Handcarts had to be made, supplies gathered, oxen caught and broken to pull the heavy supply wagons, everything that even hinted of being a luxury, must be eliminated. There were many keepsakes that I wanted to take, but couldn't. But there was one thing I didn't consider a luxury and that was my feather-bed. ... no matter how I folded it, it was too bulky. ... But a feather-bed is a feather-bed and when it came to choosing between Zion and a feather-bed, well it was a little too late to turn my back on Zion, so I ripped it open and emptied the feathers on the ground and used the tick to cover the supplies on the handcart. ...

"There came a time when there seemed to be no food at all. Some of the men left to hunt buffalo. Night was coming and there was no food for the evening meal. I asked God's help as I always did. I got on my knees, remembering two hard sea biscuits that were still in my trunk. ... They were not large, and were so hard they couldn't be broken. Surely, that was not enough to feed 8 people, but 5 loaves and 2 fishes were not enough to feed 5,000 people either, but through a miracle, Jesus had done it. So, with God's help, nothing is impossible. I found the biscuits and put them in a dutch oven and covered them with water and asked for God's blessing, then I put the lid on the pan and set it on the coals. When I took off the lid a little later, I found the pan filled with food. I kneeled with my family and thanked God for his goodness. That night my family had sufficient food. ...

"The last time we crossed the Platte River, Samuel's clothes were soaked. By the time he got to camp it was sundown and

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his clothes were frozen so stiff he could hardly move. I wrapped a blanket around him and he stood by the fire, while I dried his clothing. ... I watched with alarm, my stepdaughter Eliza, grow weaker each day. She was never very strong. I had always devoted a lot of love and care to her, but she passed away one day and was buried off to the side of the trail. Her long journey was at an end, but ours had a long way yet to go. John, being the oldest boy, had borne the brunt of the hard work. I was grateful for my faith in God, for it was only through this faith, that I was able to carry on at all. I confess, it seemed at times, the Lord had deserted us. I watched John, so cold, drowsy and sick, want to lie down in his tracks, never to rise again. I had to stand helplessly while Captain Willie whipped him, to make him go on. Gladly, would I have taken the whipping myself.

"In traveling at night, in the frost of that altitude, Thomas's right hand froze while he was pushing on the back of the cart and when we stopped at night and his hand got warm, it swelled up, as Samuel said, 'like a toad.' [Thomas] could finally go no farther and I felt my heart would break as I saw him laying beside the trail, waiting for the sick wagon. By the time he was picked up, his body was frozen in two places. That night, 12 people died and the next morning, 3 people joined them. I always thought, I shall be the happiest person, if I could reach Zion, with all my children alive.

"However, the Lord had not deserted us and I was ashamed for thinking for a moment, he had. ... Hope came to us. ... When the rescue party found us ... it was good to see my family eat again. ... Cyrus H. Wheelock ... met us with the provisions and he could not hold back the tears when he saw the condition of our company. With wagons to help us, we unloaded our carts. Samuel felt he could pull our handcart by himself and perhaps it would be useful when we got to the valley. He tried, but the trail was so rough and mud balled up on the wheels. I was very weary of the thing and was glad to see the family push it to one side and leave it. I think none of us cared to see it again. We were able to ride on the wagons when we went downhill and I think that everyone enjoyed that. ... I thanked God ... that the ordeal was over. The last few days I was especially eager to reach the valley, as I had suffered an accident, a piece of sagebrush had gotten into my eye. It was very painful. I was very glad to be where I could get it extracted."



Looking at Mars Hill from the back of the Rowley home in England
(photo courtesy Bernard Haw)

Ann had courageously fulfilled her "dream of going to Zion," with great faith and trust in God. Within ten years Ann had remarried twice and been widowed twice. She was blessed by both of these husbands who she reported were very good to her. Ann ended her story by noting that she "learned to read and write after I came to Utah."

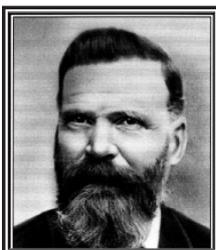
All members of the Rowley family sustained and supported one another throughout their lives. They continued their father's business of fruit farming, as well as many other worthy and successful endeavors in their pioneering years. In spite of their continuing challenges, including some with the Hole-in-the-Rock Expedition, Richard Rowley summarized their family's experience with these words of faith: "By the protecting care of the Lord we were preserved to gather with the Saints in the valleys of the Mountains. ... As a boy I had faith in the Gospel and great respect for the authorities of the church and always had courage to defend them in my weak way. On January 29, 1864, I was ordained an Elder and I have assisted in many ways in making Parowan what it is now. In the winter of 1865 I was called to drive an ox team down the Missouri River to bring emigrants to Utah. I was honored with the call and ... performed the duties of my mission to the best of my ability."

Sources: *Some Early Pioneers of Huntington, Utah and Surrounding Area*, James Albert Jones, 1980; "Autobiography of Ann Jewell Rowley," <http://aprilsancestry.com/RowleyWilliam.html>; *Rowley Family Histories: Treasures of Truth from the Lives of William and Ann Jewell Rowley and Their Children, 1835-1930*, compiled by Frank Richardson, 1992; *The Price We Paid*, by Andrew D. Olsen, 2006; "Richard Rowley," autobiography. See *Follow Me To Zion* by Andrew Olsen and Jolene Allphin, Deseret Book, 2013, for artwork and more Rowley family stories.

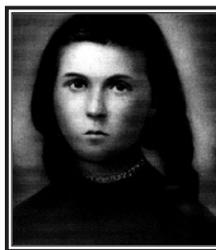
¹"Though the official diary of the company records her death in a single sentence, we could easily underestimate the significance of her death in the lives of Ann Rowley and her children. Eliza was like another mother or older sister to the Rowley children. They had never known life without her. In later years, they wrote of her with reverence and emotion. They named their children after her. It is clear from Rowley family histories that they felt her loss deeply. ... As descendants of these unusually dedicated people, we unitedly raise a cry of tribute to this courageous soul who perished in the act of gathering to Zion in obedience to the counsel of God's prophets. ... [She] walked nearly a thousand miles before she succumbed to hunger, cold, and exhaustion. She died only hours before help arrived. ... God bless us to remember her sacrifice." (*Rowley Family Histories*, p. 55-56)



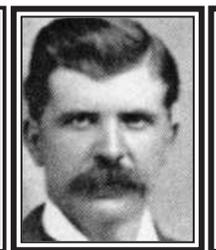
Elizabeth Rowley



John Rowley



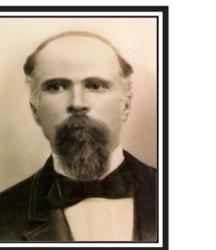
Jane Rowley



Thomas Rowley



Louisa Rowley



Richard Rowley