

ANNIE THORNE

Born: 18 October 1829 in Chalford, Oxford, England
 Age: 26
 Hunt Wagon Company



Annie Thorne traveled to Zion with her mother, Jane Thorne (age 53). Annie's maternal grandparents were Peter and Sarah Smith Thorne. Annie's father is unknown. When her mother married Richard Golightly in 1860, Annie was adopted by and sealed to him. The names Annie Thorn and Jane Thorn do not appear on any British Mission Records or passenger lists for the ship *Horizon*, nor are they on the official Hunt wagon company roster. If not for the following information from Mary Goble's reminiscences of the Hunt company, their identity in the Hunt company may not have been known.

Mary wrote about the October 20, 1856, discovery of the remains of Jonathan Stone of the Martin handcart company. Jonathan Stone had been at the Hunt company camp the night of October 19, not crossing the Platte River with the rest of his company earlier in the day. In attempting a return to the Martin company that night, he was attacked and killed by wolves. Mary wrote of Richard Pay discovering Brother Stone's body the next morning: "[Richard] was driving cattle one day and some of them ran in the brush. He went after them and he saw a man's vest, part of a leg and an arm. The vest had a watch in the pocket. . . . It looked like a man had sat down to rest and had gone to sleep and had been killed and eaten by wolves. His name was Bro[ther] Stone. He must have been making for our camp, as he had a sister and her daughter living there that he used to stay with very often. [Richard] gave the watch to his sister, Jane. She later moved to Spanish Fork. Her daughter's name was Anna. She married Bishop Wells of Spanish Fork."¹

When Jolene Allphin researched the early ward records of Spanish Fork, and identified "Bishop Wells" as Stephen Robert Wells, the identity of "Anna" and "Jane" were discovered. Further research by Laura Anderson, missionary at the Church History Library, indicates that Jane "Jemmett" who signed up to sail on the *Horizon* was the same person as Jane Thorne. Subsequent access to Wells family records confirmed this mother and daughter's identity and presence in the Hunt wagon company. Jane did have a brother, James Thorne, in the Martin handcart company. James was traveling with Jonathan Stone and George Lawley. These three men all died on the journey. (Mary Goble had mistakenly thought that Jonathan Stone was Jane's brother and Annie's uncle.)

Besides traversing the plains alongside the Martin handcart company, Annie had other connections with those fellow pioneers. She was friends with Patience Loader, who wrote that upon arriving in Salt Lake City: "Brother William Thorn took home with him my mother and brother, Robert, myself and sisters, Maria, Jane and Sarah. . . . When we first arrived in the city, everything looked dreary and cold. The streets were all covered with snow, but the people were kind and good and tried to encourage us and make us feel as good as they could. . . . I stayed in the city for some weeks. At that time the city was not built up very much. . . . I had been living eleven years in the city of London before I left England and to me it seemed a very lonely place. I said to my old friend, Annie Thorn, 'If this is Salt Lake City, what must it be like to live in the country.' Sister Thorn took me out some. She wanted me to see a little about the city, as I was feeling somewhat lonesome."²

William Thorne was Annie's cousin. He had immigrated to Utah in 1851 with his father, David Thorne. David was Annie's mother's brother. Perhaps Annie and her mother went to stay with David's family upon arrival in Salt Lake City. Annie had followed the conversion route of her uncles and cousins and was baptized in April of 1852, two years after her mother. Four months after arriving in the Valley, Annie married Stephen Robert Wells, who had previously married Annie's older cousin, Mary Ann Lowe.

Annie and Stephen settled in Spanish Fork, where three of their children were born. They pioneered in St. George, where five more children were born, including a son they named St. George. A letter to St. George Wells from his father gives some insight into the teachings of Annie and Stephen to their children: "When I think of the many duties of life that there is to do, I find that the boy or girl who begins the soonest makes the best man or woman. Therefore, mix up with play and work some reading, spelling, writing, and then some music which will make your company always agreeable, go where you may. You must labour with your hands and head, sometimes with one at the time and sometimes with both at the same time."³

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Stephen Wells was a well-educated English gentleman and a descendant of Isaac Newton. His mother used to tell him, “*Study hard so you’ll grow up to be as smart as Uncle Isaac!*”⁴

Annie’s grandson, George Wells, married Eliza Ann Everett. Eliza’s father, Schuyler Alanson Everett, was a participant in the 1856 rescue. Schuyler’s biography gives us some sad details that indicate the suffering experienced by these immigrants: “*Schuyler brought thirteen people back in his wagon, and one little boy died on the way in.*”⁵

Annie’s granddaughter, Ann Eliza Wells, also married an 1856 rescuer, J.D.T. McAllister.⁶ Ann Eliza served as Temple Matron when her husband was called as President of the Manti Temple. One of Annie’s great-grandsons is Robert E. Wells, a General Authority in the LDS Church.

Annie and Stephen participated often in temple work after the St. George Temple was completed. Annie saved and carefully pasted the many slips of paper with names for whom she had completed temple work into her journal.⁷ Stephen was also a popular entertainer in the community.

Annie was left a widow for thirteen years after Stephen was killed in a buggy accident while driving home from Cedar City. Annie needed much care during this time as she had become blind. She was cared for by her son, St. George, and his family, in the fine two-story home at First South and Third West that Stephen had built. “*One day Annie was standing in front of their open fireplace and reached up to get something from the mantle. As she did so, her dress caught fire and the flames quickly flared up and burned her face badly. She died shortly thereafter*”⁸ on January 9, 1902.

¹“Life of Mary Goble Pay June 2, 1843 - Sept. 25, 1913,” DUP history files, 12. Excerpts from this autobiography are on the Mormon Migration website, sourced as “Pay, Mary Goble, Autobiography (Formerly in Msd 2050) (Reel 10: Box 13: Folder 5: Item 6), pp. 1-2, 5;” and the Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website as “Pay, Mary Goble, Autobiographical sketch 1896-1909, 2-5.” See also: Pay, Mary G, to SS Jones, Oct 18, 1908, in Handcart Veterans Association Scrapbook 1906-1914, Fd. 5, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, BYU, Provo.

²Bell, Stella Jaques, *Life History and Writings of John Jaques, including a Diary of the Martin Handcart Company*, 1978, p. 173. Available at the LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

³Wells, Anita Cramer, *Keep the Faith – Wells Family Pioneer Guide*, privately published, 2011, pgs. 61-62.

⁴*Keep the Faith*, 64.

⁵*Keep the Faith*, 17.

⁶McAllister was the composer of the handcart song. See his biography in rescuer section of *Tell My Story, Too*.

⁷Annie’s journal is currently in the possession of Jolene Allphin, courtesy Merrill Wells.

⁸*Keep the Faith*, 60.



Annie and daughters



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