

ELIZABETH GREEN



Born: 17 March 1833 Manchester, England

Age: 23

Martin Handcart Company

Elizabeth was the daughter of James and Mary Bellis Green. Her father was a musician. He conducted the theater orchestra in Manchester. Elizabeth also enjoyed music. She had a beautiful soprano voice, and sang in her church choir. When Elizabeth was about ten years old, her mother and father both died. She went to live with her Aunt Elizabeth Bellis Broadmeadow in Liverpool. At the age of eighteen, she joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Aunt Betsy had been very kind to Elizabeth until this time, but then turned bitterly against her.

While she was in Liverpool, she helped to care for a friend afflicted with tuberculosis and contracted the disease. She asked for a blessing and was promised that if she went to Zion, the consumption should be cast from her. Therefore, she boarded the ship *Horizon* and sailed in faith. She was very seasick, but the “consumption was cast from her [and] she never was afflicted again.”

The younger members of the handcart company were put with the older members. Elizabeth was placed with an older woman named Mary Harper, age 64. Mary’s faith matched that of Elizabeth’s. She was known as “Aunt Mary” on the trail. She actually was an aunt to Henry Arnold, who had come to Utah prior to 1856. Henry had sent Mary money to emigrate to Utah with a wagon train. When she got to Iowa and found out that five people could come if she walked instead of rode, she cashed in her ticket and came by handcart in spite of being in her sixties.

The journey was very hard for Mary and she soon became too weak to walk. Elizabeth put her on the cart and pulled her for several days. As she pulled Mary along in the extreme heat, Elizabeth had a craving for salt. She knelt down and told the Lord that without salt she just could not go on. Soon a man saw her standing by a rock crying and asked her what was the matter. She told him of her craving for salt. He told Elizabeth to go to a certain wagon in a train that was passing. He knew there was some salt down in one corner of that wagon. She could have it if she would get it. Elizabeth had to unload and reload the wagon of its bags of wheat. In the cracks of the floor of the wagon box she was able to find almost a cupful of salt which she carefully rationed. She scooped it up in a clean cloth and very carefully used it as she went along to make her food more palatable. To her dying day she could not bear to see anyone waste a grain of salt. She said, “If you had ever been as hungry for salt as I have, you would never waste even a grain of it.” One day Elizabeth struggled at the end of the train and was late getting to camp. When she finally arrived, she realized that Mary had died. It appears Mary’s death was in Martin’s Cove.

Relief trains finally brought the Martin company to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving November 30, 1856. Henry Arnold came to meet his Aunt Mary, but instead, Elizabeth had to tell him the sad news that she had died on the Plains. Henry took Elizabeth to his home to be nursed back to health. They were married a short time later. Aunt Mary did not make it to the Salt Lake Valley, but perhaps five other people did because she chose to push a handcart. Through Mary Harper’s need of help with her handcart, Elizabeth Green was blessed to meet her husband. Elizabeth also received the promised blessing of health. She and Henry had nine children.

On September 18, 1907, Elizabeth wrote a letter to Thomas Dobson, regarding the upcoming Handcart Veterans Association reunion: “In reading over the names of the Hand cart company in Saturday’s news I find there are a few names that have not been reported, my own included. As you are one of the committee, I thought I had better write to you. I think that you will be glad to add them to the list as I think that every living member of the noble hand cart com[pany] should be reported. . . . hoping you will see to this matter . . . and oblige your old friend, Elizabeth G. Arnold / 316 Wall Street / Salt Lake City.” Besides her own name, Elizabeth added eight names to the list.

Sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneer history files; “Elizabeth Green Arnold biographical sketch,” by Emma Rich Bingham, in history files of JoAnn Mellor Felix (“Historical Department Call # MS 12571”); photo and untitled biography of Elizabeth Green from Gaylene Burbidge, Farmington, Utah; MS 11378: Handcart Veterans Association scrapbook 1906-1914, folder 3, items 29-31, Church History Library.