

## WILLIAM WALSH

Born: 1826 England (Died Nov. 1856 on the plains)

Age: 30

Martin Handcart Company



Alice Fish Walsh (Strong)

William was traveling with his wife, Alice Fish Walsh, and their three children: Robert (age 4), John (3), and Sarah (1). Robert, died of dysentary on September 13, near Fort Kearney, Nebraska Territory. The following is a journal entry by William's wife, Alice:

We arrived at Devil's Gate about the 1st of November. On account of the nightly fatalities of the male members of our company for two or three weeks previously, there were many widows in our camp and the women and children had to pitch and put up the tents, shoveling the snow away with tin plates, etc. making our beds on the ground and getting up in the morning with melted snow and lye on our clothing. This hard service continued with all that were able to endure it till we nearly reached the south pass and one night I dropped to the ground in a dead faint with my baby in my arms. I had some pepper pods with me. In recovering from my stupor I took some of them to warm and to recover my strength. During these times we had only a little thin flour gruel two or three times a day and this was meager nourishment for a mother with a nursing baby.

My husband died and was buried near Devil's Gate and the ground was frozen so hard that the men had a difficult task in digging the grave deep enough in which to inter him and nine others that morning, and it is more than probable that several were only covered with snow. Here I was left a widow with two young children. The boy [John] became so weak that he could not stand alone and I had to sit and hold both of them in the relief wagons. At times most of us had to walk after being met by the teams from Salt Lake, and late in the day and towards the evening my shoes would nearly freeze to my feet and at one time in taking off, some of the skin and flesh came off with them. Some of the bones of my feet were left bare and my hands were severely frozen. ... After arriving in Salt Lake Nov. 30th 1856, with two children and the clothes I stood up in, were all of my earthly possessions in a strange land, without kin or relatives.

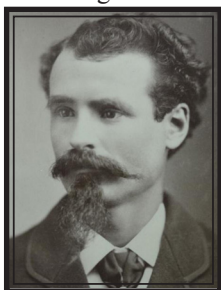
Alice's mother wrote from England, offering to send Alice money to return home if she would renounce her beliefs. Alice told her no, that she had joined the Church and traveled across the ocean and most of the American continent because she knew that the Church was true, and that she would remain in Utah.

Alice married Jacob Strong, had three more children, and lived as a widow for another 52 years after Jacob died in 1872. She lived to be ninety-five years old. She raised her children to honor their fathers' memories. At the time of her death, her son, William, was serving a mission in England. William wrote in a letter to his sister-in-law: "Just before I left to come on my mission she said to me at first that she did not think I should go away and leave her, as she was getting old now, and she would not stay with us long. I said, 'Mother, the prophet of the Lord has called me to give service to the Church. What shall I do?' She answered, 'Go! By all means. If I die all is well with me; if I live it is the same. You cannot keep me here when my time comes. Go! And the Lord bless you!' ... It made no difference how poor she was, she always had a few cents laid by in case she needed something special, which in a spirit of true love, she would give to her children. ... Though she did not become wealthy, she always possessed a little property, which never failed her, because she kept the commandments."

Toward the end of her life, Alice recorded: "I have always been proud to know that I had the individual courage to accept and embrace the faith and join the Church, to which I have ever been steadfast from that day to this. Though the sufferings were terrible, I passed [through] in the handcart journey across the plains, I am still thankful that the Lord preserved my life and made it possible for me to reach Zion. ... After all that I have endured and passed through, ... my testimony is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is true." Fourteen of Alice's children and grandchildren served missions. John Walsh, the son of William and Alice, served two missions. He also served as a patriarch and was one of the early mayors of Farmington, Utah.



Sarah Walsh



John Walsh

Sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneer history files; "Gather to Zion: 'This I have done for Him,'" by Andrew D. Olsen, *Church News*, December 30, 2006.