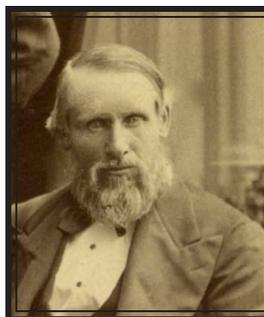


## THOMAS STEED

Born: December 13, 1826 in England

Age: 29

Rescuer



Thomas and Mary Elizabeth Bailey Steed

Thomas Steed wrote of his participation in the rescue: In the latter part of October, 1856, with a number of others, I started on the road to meet the handcart Companies. It was late in the season and we had a pretty rough time. We met the first Company [Willie] one day's drive east of Fort Bridger. [November 2] The sight I shall never forget; they looked like Indians from afar. They had encountered a severe snowstorm down on the Sweet Water, a most bitter cold to endure; in consequence a great many laid down their bodies to rest in death, worn out with the toils and hardships of the journey and many other were frost bitten very bad. I could not refrain from tears when I beheld the scene that surrounded me.

Here I met my niece, Sarah E. Steed, my brother John's only child; I had sent for her from England. Thanks to the mercy of Providence she was in good health, although a lame girl, aged about 20 years. With them was also Brother John Bailey, whom I had known in England, and his daughter, Mary Elizabeth, who later became my second wife. Brother Bailey was so severely frostbitten that his daughter had to carry him. I calculated to return with these to the Valley. I had come for that very purpose; but there was another Company farther back and Brother Wm. Kimball, who was in charge of the [Willie] teams, wished me to let others take care of my friends and accompany the teamsters who went after the last Company. We wept together when I had to tell them of that decision. My poor friend Bailey died in arriving to Salt Lake. [John's wife, Elizabeth Bailey, had died October 24. She was buried with 12 or 13 others in the common grave at Rock Creek.]

We traveled on until we came to the last crossing of the Big Sandy, going East, but could not see nor hear from them. Here we had a very severe snow storm and concluded to send two men down to the Sweet Water to see if any intelligence could be obtained; but the storm was so violent that the two men returned at night to us. Capt. Amussen concluded to fall back unto Green River where about 50 teams were stopping. In the morning Van Cott and C. Spencer started back for the Valley; the rest followed until we were as far as Fort Bridger and here halted for a few days, waiting to see if we could hear from the Company. In four days an express arrived, telling that those people were down at the Sweet Water. We harnessed up and started and met them about ten miles East of the Pacific Springs. They were in a very sad condition; a great many badly frozen. We used all the care and attention we could to make them as comfortable as possible. My only blanket I gave to a sick girl to keep her warm. We made good headway towards the Valley and arrived on the 30th of November, thankful that the Lord had brought us safely through the cold and snow to our families.

The winter set in pretty severe. I froze one of my feet in going to town with a load of tithing hay. My [first] wife Laura knew what to do for me: "Stay out of the kitchen; I will bring a bucket of cold water from the spring to put your foot in." That was done, and a piece of ice just the shape of my boot formed on that cold water; the circulation of the blood was re-established and my life saved. ...

Mary Elizabeth Bailey, my second wife, was born at Leigh, Worcester, Eng., 29 Dec., 1838; she was the mother of James John Steed, her only child; she died at Farmington, 12th of May, 1876, while I was on a mission in New Zealand. Then Laura took care of [James John] as tenderly as of the other children. John Bailey, father of Betsy, was born 7th April, 1804, in Eng., and died of the hardships endured in the Hand Cart Company, on his arrival in Salt Lake the 9th Nov., 1856.

Sources: *The Life of Thomas Steed from His Own Diary 1826-1910*, presented to the Church Historian's Office, August 12, 1935, by Cecelia G. Steed. (More of Thomas Steed's diary will be transcribed at tellmystorytoo.com. Parts of Thomas Steed's diary were included in Journal History of the Church for 1856, but some errors were introduced. For instance: Thomas wrote that his niece, Sarah E. Steed, "was in good health, although a lame girl." Journal history records: "she was in good health, although a lone girl." Of his having to leave his niece and the Bailey family to find the Martin Company, Thomas wrote: "Brother Wm. Kimball, who was in charge of the teams, wished me to let others take care of my friends and accompany the teamsters who went after the last Company. We wept together when I had to tell them of that decision. My poor friend Bailey died in arriving to Salt Lake." Journal history records: "Brother William Kimball, who was in charge of the teams, wished me to let others take care of my friends and accompany the teamsters who went after the last company. We wept together when I told them my poor friend Bailey died in arriving to Salt Lake."); "Mary Elizabeth Bailey Steed," Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files.