

A Short Biography of Christina McNeil

Including a Study of Her Published References

By Robert N. Reynolds

Christina McNeil was born in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland, the fourth of six children. Her parents, Donald McNeil and Christian Taylor, were married the 14th of January 1825 in Gorbals, Glasgow, Scotland by the Gaelic minister, Kenneth McKenzie.¹ They established their residence nearby -- on the west side of McAlpine Street, only a block from the River Clyde.² In a neighborhood of textile, cotton and carpet mills, Christina was sent out to perform factory work when only seven years old. It was a hard life. Her father, who plied his trade as a journeyman copper-smith died when Christina was fifteen. Two years later on the second of October, 1849, at age 17, she responded to the message brought by Mormon missionaries and was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Elder John Gray.³

The only member of her immediate family to look with kindness upon the newly established church, Christina soon left her childhood home and obtained lodging at 7 Dyers Lane with the widow Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell and her family of Mormon converts.⁴ There she lived for at least six years where her faith was nurtured daily by gospel music and the reading of holy scripture. Neither Christina nor any of her children left a written record with details about her parents and siblings, but ample stories have been handed down which describe the personal grief she felt of losing her mother. A few grandchildren wrote short life sketches of what they had heard in family conversations. At least one wrote that upon her conversion to Mormonism Christina was "driven from her home" by her own mother.⁵ One of the Caldwell grandchildren later wrote that Christina's mother would visit her only when she needed money.⁶

The Matron of Christina's new home, the widow Caldwell, had joined the LDS church in 1840. Upon the death of her husband she and her children committed themselves to the

1 4/01/1825 Taylor, Christian (O.P.R. Marriages 644/0810400 0310 Glasgow).

2 Census, 1841, Glasgow Parish 644 St. George, Enumerator's Schedule No. 14, Lanark County, Scotland.

3 LDS International Genealogical Society records, Family Search.

4 1851 Census of Great Britain, Enumeration Book 48, Scotland B.

5 Workman, Josephine, "Christina McNeil (In Character)," typescript, six pages, undated, unsigned, with attached note identifying author. Note: Josephine Reynolds Workman (1898-1989) was a daughter of Philanda Maria Reynolds, daughter of Warren Ford Reynolds and first wife Edna Merrell.

6 Life Sketch of Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell, dictated to Veara Southworth Fife by her mother, Agnes Caldwell Southworth, daughter of Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell, about 1920, copy given to author by Jolene S. Allphin, 2008.

goal of "joining the Saints in the valley of the Mountains." To earn and save money she "ran a boarding house where the LDS missionaries were always welcome along with (her) regular boarders." It was while living in this Caldwell home environment, less than a mile east of her mother's place, that Christina McNeil reported to the Census Enumerator in 1851 that she was employed as a "Yarn Winder." Christina, too, had set her mind to leave Scotland someday and join the Saints in Utah. Some seventy-seven years later the widow Caldwell's granddaughter, Veara Southworth Fife, wrote of her family's 1856 move to Utah. She penned:

"She (Margaret Caldwell) also brought with her a girl named Christina McNeil whom she had befriended..... Christina helped grandmother cook and keep house for the missionaries and other boarders and would not think of letting Grandmother leave Scotland without her. The little family sailed from Scotland in April and from Liverpool the 4th day of May 1856, on the ship "Thornton" under the direction of James G. Willie. They landed in Castle Gardens, New York, which is now Ellis Island, on June 14, 1856. One extremely hot day grandmother with her daughter Agnes and Christina McNeil, started out to find an L.D.S. Sunday School. They were fairly well on their way when Christina's nose began to bleed and try as they would, nothing would stop it. They found shade and rested and tried all the simple remedies they could think of but to no avail. Her nose bleed seemed rather persistent, in fact, the blood stream was increasing. Grandmother then administered to her and the blood stopped almost immediately and they went on their way rejoicing. Throughout their journey it seemed as though Grandmother had been given the power of healing." ⁷

In 1849 the church established a "Perpetual Emigration Fund (PEF)" to assist impoverished converts to the LDS faith to "gather to Zion." It was the help of this fund that enabled Christina and the Caldwell family, in 1856, to leave Scotland for Liverpool, England in April of that historic year -- a journey of 180 miles; and to obtain passage for America -- a high seas journey that would take six weeks. ⁸

In May, at age 23, Christina and the Caldwell family joined with a large group of Saints, numbering over 1500 souls, on the docks at Liverpool, to set sail for America in two

7 From a biography of Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell Bennett written for the Federal Writers' Project by Elvera Manful, Ogden, Weber, Utah, December 1939, from notes written by Mrs. Veara. Fife, granddaughter of Margaret Bennett and daughter of Mrs. Agnes Caldwell Southworth in 1933. From <http://sh1.webring.com/people/ks/sjkelsey/history5gen/margaretm.htm>, July, 2011.

8 The Willie and Martin Handcart Companies epitomized the several emigrant groups which left England in the depressed economic times of the mid-1800s. As a means of travel, these groups chose handcarts to carry their personal belongings because they could not afford to purchase wagons and oxen; and so, they were thus encouraged by their church authorities to use handcarts, which proved in some companies to be more expeditious than Ox and wagon.

vessels, the Thornton and the Horizon. The details of their passage from England to America, and then their trek to the Great Basin of Utah, has been told in books, novels, and Internet sites. The publication of original journals, carefully prepared by a few historically minded individuals, has served to authenticate the details of both the spiritual highlights and the heart rendering tragedies that characterized what has become known as the Willie and Martin Handcart Companies story.

The Riddle of Passage

The Thornton sailed out of Liverpool Harbor on 4 May, 1856, bound for New York City, with 560 adult, 172 children and 29 infant passengers. There is no known evidence that Christina McNeil was on board.⁹ Notwithstanding Veara Southworth Fife's story of her grandmother's healing powers in the Christina McNeil nosebleed incident in New York City, upon disembarking from the Thornton, the LDS church Internet site does not list Christina McNeil among the passengers of the Thornton.¹⁰

If Christina did not cross the Atlantic aboard the Thornton then she must have been a passenger on the later ship, the Horizon, which sailed from Liverpool on 25 May 1856, with 946 LDS immigrants on board, and arrived in Boston Harbor on 30 June 1856. LDS passengers on the Horizon were under the direction of Edward Martin and many, but not all, comprised his handcart company.

A digitized manifest of the Horizon's 1856 voyage is not available online; however, it is recorded on microfilm. The LDS church has published a site online where the list is given, along with many original autobiographical and journal accounts. Christina McNeil is on the list with her name spelled "Christiana McNeill."¹¹

Two Companies Meet in Iowa City

Crossing the Atlantic to Ellis Island in New York Harbor and then overland by train, the Fourth Handcart Company, under the leadership of Captain James Grey Willie, reached Iowa City on June 26, 1856. The Fifth Handcart Company under the direction of Edward

9 Historic account from church newspaper stated number of Saints aboard as 764; Millennial Star, Vol. XVIII, pages 330, 478, 542, 554; Morgenstjernen Vol. III, page 21. I have personally examined every one of the 761 names listed on the fifteen digital images of the Ship Thornton manifest, available online at ancestry.com, and failed to find the name, or anything closely resembling Christina McNeil. She was not listed with the Caldwell family or anywhere else.

10 See Passenger List from: <http://lib.byu.edu/mormonmigration/voyage.php?id=343#accounts> The sentence leading to this footnote raises a significant question regarding the veracity of Veara Southworth Fife's published writings regarding Christina McNeil. [See Appendix A to this biography where the question is examined in further detail.](#)

11 [http://lib.byu.edu/mormonmigration/voyage.php?id=168&q=Martin Handcart co#account550](http://lib.byu.edu/mormonmigration/voyage.php?id=168&q=Martin%20Handcart%20co#account550)

Martin arrived safely at Boston where they debarked at Constitution wharf on June 30. They then took cars for Iowa City, crossing the Hudson at Albany and passing through Buffalo on the fourth of July. The company arrived in Iowa City on the eighth of July, 1856.¹² The two companies were now together for at least a week making crucial exchanges in communications and preparing their supplies, equipment and handcarts. At this point Christina committed to helping Margaret Caldwell and her four young children push and pull their newly made handcart over the 1,350 miles that lay between their Iowa location and their long sought destination in the Great Salt Lake Valley in Utah territory. They were assigned to travel with a group of about 100 individuals under the direction of Elder Millen Atwood, councilor to Captain Willie.

With great trepidation over the lateness of the season, and with the days growing shorter, the Willie Company left Iowa City on July 15. Before reaching their destination in the Great Basin of Utah, many in the party died of hunger, exhaustion, and hypothermia while others experienced frostbite and other tribulations. A few abandoned their trek.

At various points along the way members of the handcart companies bartered and traded their personal items of value in exchange for food, bedding and clothing with local residents and other travelers. One incident regarding Christina was perpetuated and embellished over time until it was worthy of publication in books and Internet sites. The substance of the story was that in attempting to trade some small items of value at a trading post Christina was tempted by an army officer with money and clothes to discontinue her journey -- an offer she courageously refused. The earliest typescripts known have the incident occurring at the army trading post at Florence, Nebraska, but in a typescript produced by Margaret Ann Caldwell's granddaughter, Rosilla E. Osborn, sixty-five years after the event, in 1921, the story changed geographic location and took on historic proportions:

"At a station in Laramie, Wyoming, the 30th of September 1856, mother, in company of her sixteen year old boy and the young lady Christena McNeil who was in mother's charge, visited one of the Generals in command at the fort, to obtain permission to trade some trinkets and silver spoons for flour and meat. The officer said he would not use any of the things but to leave the young lady in his office while she proceeded to another station where he assured her she would be able to obtain the things she desired. He seemed very kind and not wishing to arouse any feeling of ill will she left the boy and Christena. During her absence the officer used the time in trying to persuade Christena to stay there, proposing to her, showing her the gold he possessed, telling her what a fine lady he would make of her. Then he tried discouraging her, telling her how the hand cart company would never reach Utah, because of the severe cold, they would die of exposure

12 Millennial Star, Vol. XVIII, pages 377,542, 536, 554)" Cont., 14:1 (Nov. 1892), pp.21-22.

*and hunger. Like all noble girls, and true to the cause for which she had left Scotland, her home and friends just to be in Utah, she told him in plain language she would take her chance with the others even though it may mean death. She was greatly relieved to have my mother return. The officer seemed to admire her very much for her loyalty to her faith and gave her a large well cured ham, and wished her well in her chosen adventure."*¹³

By the end of the third week in October the Willie Company, having experienced several deaths along the way, was so short on rations that some members boiled rawhide shoes for soup. The company had reached the upper Sweetwater drainage when the early snows of winter descended upon them, causing multiple deaths and severe conditions and anguish. A large party from Salt Lake City, called by Brigham Young, came to the rescue. With faith and endurance in her chosen course, and endowed with both physical and moral courage, Christina was numbered among the successful survivors who finally reached the Great Salt Lake Valley on November 9. Having experienced her 24th birthday on September 22, 1856 as "a long and hard day....along the Platte River in Nebraska.....with the road being very heavy and sandy," she was committed and ready to spend the rest of her life in "Zion" beneath the "protecting shadows" of the Wasatch Mountains.

After reaching the handcart journey's end, Christina found refuge in the pioneer home of Edna and Warren Ford Reynolds in South Cottonwood, where she contributed a helpful and grateful hand. Seven months after arriving Warren took Christina as his second wife, sealing their union in The Endowment House on 28 June 1857. Their marriage of forty-four years was blessed with four daughters and three sons. When Christina died in 1901 she was survived by her seven children and 34 grandchildren.

Appendix A

Agnes Caldwell Southworth was nine years old when she journeyed to Utah in the company of her mother's family and Christina McNeil. Born 22 February 1847, Agnes died in Brigham City, Utah at age 77 on 11 September 1924 of heart fibrillation. After coming to Utah her mother's family settled in Brigham City where Agnes met and married Chester Southworth. They became the parents of 13 children. They lived in Brigham City, Utah, Idaho, Canada, and California. After Chester's death in California in 1910 Agnes returned to Brigham City.¹⁴ Agnes is said to have been an avid reader of

13 Rosilla E. Osborn, "Biography of Agnes Caldwell Southworth," dictated by Agnes Caldwell Southworth to her daughter Rosilla E. Osborn, April 20, 1921, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library, Salt Lake City, 3-4.

Please see [Appendix A](#) for comparisons between the various typescript accounts.

14 Allphin, Jolene S., Tell My Story Too, A collection of biographical sketches of pioneers and rescuers of

history, but apparently she did not write or record with her own hand any of her life history. Instead, during her last years she recalled the events of her life to her visiting children. From these sessions at least two of her daughters took written notes from which later biographical sketches were created, both for Agnes and for her mother Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell. These written sketches were labeled as biographies and copies were later deposited with the Daughter of Utah Pioneers.¹⁵ The two daughters were Veara Southworth Fife and Rosilla E. Osborn.

The writings of Fife and Osborn, regarding Christina McNeil, have been the source or foundation of published accounts in at least two well known works on the Martin and Willie Handcart Company story. These two works are: (1) "I Walked To Zion" by Susan Arrington Madsen, and (2) "Tell My Story Too" by Jolene S. Allphin.

Agnes' daughter, Rosilla E. Osborn created a typescript she entitled "Biography of Agnes Caldwell Southworth."¹⁶ This document has been referenced in several online sites, but in particular an event pertaining to Christina McNeil is used in the Paul Lyman Commentary for October 1, 1856 on the BYU Studies site, "The Travels of the Willie Handcart Company."¹⁷

Critique and Analysis

As referenced in the above publications, two specific occurrences in the writings of Veara Southworth and Rosilla Osborn are alleged to have involved Christina McNeil during her emigration to Utah in 1856. Because these two events have been published in popular works treating the Willie Handcart Company, and because there exists contradictory information between accounts, including the hurtful, but totally unsourced allegation that Christina McNeil's mother was a "drunkard," an effort is here made to help clarify these matters.

As a preface to this search the reader is asked to keep in mind the vast difference in years

the Willie, Martin, Hodgett, Hunt Companies 1856, page 5; 2001, Dingman Professional Printing, Ogden, Utah.

15 In creating an account of Agnes Caldwell, author Susan Madsen stated that it was a "typescript of an interview conducted by Veara Southworth." It is misnamed as an autobiography (see Madsen, Susan Arrington, I Walked To Zion, True Stories of Young Pioneers on the Mormon Trail, page 58, in account of Agnes Caldwell Southworth; original source is "Autobiography of Agnes Caldwell," typescript of interview conducted by Veara Southworth Fife, her daughter. Original in files of Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum in Salt Lake City, Utah, Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994.

16 Rosilla E. Osborn, "Biography of Agnes Caldwell Southworth," dictated by Agnes Caldwell Southworth to her daughter Rosilla E. Osborn, April 20, 1921, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library, Salt Lake City, 3-4.

17 <http://handcart.byu.edu/>

between the time the actual events took place and the time in which the written accounts were produced from information "handed down." Respecting this fact, the author finds it less than amusing to discover some of the devious ways that later writers have used in their attempts to give credence to their stories. Examples include that of citing as an "autobiography" a work that was produced by a second party.¹⁸ A second example is that of authors cutting and posting snippets of different accounts and placing these out of context in their narrative.¹⁹

New York City Incident

The first occurrence is alleged to have taken place in New York City after the passengers of the tall ship Thornton debarked to attend church on "one extremely hot day." It would have been Sunday June 15, 1856. I have found at least three variations of the story on the Internet, and still another one appears in "Tell My Story Too."²⁰ All of the variations can be traced to the pen of Vera Southworth Fife in her writings about her grandmother. Rosilla Osborn's account does not mention the New York incident, nor do the accounts produced by Margaret Ann's children Elizabeth and Thomas.

Three of the variations follow:

The following biography of Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell Bennett was written for the Federal Writers' Project by Elvera Manful, Ogden, Weber, Utah, December 1939, from notes written by Mrs. Veara Fife, grand-daughter of Margaret (Ann McFall Caldwell) Bennett and daughter of Mrs. Agnes Caldwell Southworth in 1933.

One extremely hot day grandmother with her daughter Agnes and Christina McNeil, started out to find an L.D.S. Sunday School. They were fairly well on their way when Christina's nose began to bleed and try as they would, nothing would stop it. They found shade and rested and tried all the simple remedies they could think of but to no avail. Her nose bleed seemed rather persistent, in fact, the blood stream was increasing. Grandmother then administered to her and the blood stopped almost immediately and they went on their way rejoicing. Throughout their journey it seemed as though Grandmother had been given the power of healing.

18 Example, the typescript Veara Southworth produced from notes she made in visiting with her mother. As in: Madsen, Susan Arrington, I Walked To Zion, True Stories of Young Pioneers on the Mormon Trail, page 58. In fact, most of the stuff Madsen used in her account of Agnes Caldwell actually originated with Rosilla Osborn. Agnes Caldwell did not produce an autobiography.

19 Allphin in her account of Christina McNeil on page 82 of "Tell My Story Too."

20 Allphin, Jolene S., page 82.

Life Sketch of Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell: (Dictated to Veara Southworth Fife by her mother Agnes Caldwell Southworth, daughter of Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell)
Copy given to me by Jolene S. Allphin. Note: A portion of the preceding and the following paragraph are included to give context.

The voyage was free from sickness and trouble. June 14, 1856 the ship docked in New York harbor. We landed at Castle Gardens, which is now Ellis Island. Here we started out to find an L.D.S. Sunday School. It was extremely hot for walking. We, my children and Christina McNeil, were well on our way when Christina's nose started bleeding and, try as we would, we could not stop the bleeding. In fact it was to no avail. Finally I administered to her as she had always shown a great deal of faith in the power of healing and administering to the sick. Since I had been left alone with my family and through the journey I seemed to be blessed with the power of healing and administration to the sick, this blessing seemed to stay with me, even after moving to Brigham City. Whenever I was called to help with the sick I seemed to bring peace and hope to all.

On Tuesday June 17, 1856, the Company left New York, under the Presidency of Levi Savage, for Dunkirk, a distance of 400 miles.

A third variation of the story as it appears on page 82 of Allphin's book:

Margaret wrote of some of Christina's experiences:

"Christina McNeil, a young girl I had befriended, was working for me. She was happy to join our family. Her mother was a drunkard and only came to see her daughter when she needed money. With my little family and Christina we left for Liverpool in April 1856. . . . June 14, 1856, the ship docked in New York harbor. We landed at Castle Gardens, which is now Ellis Island. Here we started out to find an LDS Sunday School. It was extremely hot for walking. We . . . were well on our way when Christina's nose started bleeding and, try as we would, we could not stop the bleeding. In fact it was to no avail. Finally I administered to her as she had always shown a great deal of faith in the power of healing and administering to the sick."

Note: Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell Bennett did not write anything as she was unlettered. The above paragraph is a doctored version from the first-person account Veara Southworth wrote about her grandmother. Veara was born in 1896, nine years after her grandmother died. Veara made her assumptions based on the impressions handed down to her by her mother, Agnes Caldwell Southworth, who was a nine year old child when she crossed the plains with Christina McNeil.

Summary of New York Incident:

As we learned earlier in this piece, Christina McNeil did not travel to America with the Caldwell family on the tall ship Thornton, but came a few days later on the Horizon

which docked at Boston. She rejoined the Caldwell family at Iowa City for the trek west with the Willie Company. Therefore, she could not have been a party to the New York incident. The importance of this fact relates entirely to the veracity of Veara Southworth Fife's writings. It is apparent that serious discrepancies and exaggerations exist. The mean assessment and labeling of Christina's mother, Christian Taylor, as a "drunkard" is only found in her writings. It is significant that this allegation cannot be found in the biographical sketches that were produced by either of Agnes Caldwell's older siblings, Elizabeth or Thomas, nor in the writing of Veara's sister Rosilla, nor in any of the numerous typescripts produced by Christina's descendants. It is probably safe to assume that Veara alone is responsible for it as she is the one who created the written word from the tales of her mother and from her own mind; however, we will never know the extent of Agnes' influence since she did not personally produce a written historical product. What we can't dismiss is the fact that Agnes was only nine years old when she last knew Christina and that she was but three years old when Christina came to live in Margaret Caldwell's boarding house. Also, we see by the several variations in this story that subsequent individuals have modified the original version of the story, from whenever, wherever, or whatever it was. Finally, we cannot answer the question "Did it really happen anywhere, at all?"

Veara Southworth Fife was not the only child of Agnes Caldwell to add a little glitter to her written tales. Her sister Rosilla also did a good job making a routine story better.

Army Trading Post Incident

This section could more appropriately be titled "Of Generals, Silver Spoons, Gold Offerings, Courage and Large Hams." We will compare Rosilla Osborn's foregoing Fort Laramie account, as given on page four, with that of the work of Veara Southworth Fife.

As reported earlier, neither Margaret Ann Caldwell or her daughter Agnes produced a handwritten record of their interesting lives. That job fell on the shoulders of Margaret Ann's granddaughters, Veara and Rosilla.

Veara produced her first typescript of her grandmother's life in 1916-1917. Veara was twenty years old then and already showing a deep appreciation for her ancestor's history. She wrote in "first person tense" and titled her work "A Sketch of the Life of Margaret Ann McFall." Veara recorded that it's source was "personal notes and personal knowledge of her (Margaret's) daughter Agnes Caldwell." ²¹

21 The author of this analysis has a copy of the original document as it was submitted to the DUP in 1969 by Veara Southworth Fife, daughter of Agnes Caldwell and Chester Southworth, as daughter of The Sego Lily Camp, Box Elder County, Utah.

Specific to the subject of this analysis is the section pertaining to Christina McNeil's visit to an army trading post. Picking up with Veara's 1916-17 chronological narrative, on page three we read:

On July 15, we left Iowa for old Winter Quarters or Florence, Nebraska, arriving there August 11, 1856. At Winter Quarters we were delayed repairing hand carts and tents. There were (120) one hundred and twenty carts, 12 yoke of cattle, five wagons and five mules.

Here at the Army trading post we had quite an experience. The army officer told us in all sincerity of the cold weather we would encounter; he predicted that none of us would reach Salt Lake alive. He wanted Christena to stay with him promising her most anything, telling her she was much too pretty to freeze and be buried on the prairie, telling her he would even send her along in the spring. He even tried to buy her. Her faith was strong enough to resist all his offers and she told him she would take her chances along with the rest of the Saints. Although being a widow it seemed I must be most careful in choosing the correct and necessary things in my load. It seemed as though divine guidance helped me in my decisions. The dangers seemed to present themselves to me helping me to know of the extreme dangers we would encounter. I packed only things necessary for such emergencies, leaving things of great bulk behind, trading them for more useful things.

On the 19th of August we left camp and started in real earnest the journey across the plains, traveling about 18 miles a day, including the crossing of the Elk Horn River.....

In August, 2011 my wife Alene visited the SLC headquarters of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers and obtained a complete copy of all materials in their files for Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell Bennett and Agnes Caldwell Southworth. In all, we now have five different typescripts covering the life of Margaret Ann plus a copy of Rosilla Osborn's original 1921 work on the life of her mother, Agnes. Also included is an interesting and very detailed seven page "Word Picture" of Agnes by daughter Veara. It describes everything about Agnes from the shape of her hands and fingers to the composition of her favorite gloves and underwear. All five of the typescripts on the life of Margaret Ann are plainly based on the 1916-1917 work of Veara Southworth Fife and her notes dated 1933. Each of the five were modified somewhat and retyped by the respective submitters. Dates of production include 1916-17, 1939, 1958, 1961, and 2001. Of special significance to this discussion, all five of the works based on Veara's notes and original typescript place the "Army Trading Post Incident" as occurring at Florence,

Nebraska, not Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Most importantly, Veara's account occurs in logical and chronological sequence and its substance conforms to what we know about the preparations and movements of the Willie Handcart Company.

Our attention is now focused on the DUP typescript of Rosilla Osborn's account. The copy we obtained from the DUP contains the subheading: "Dictated by Agnes Caldwell Southworth to her daughter Rosilla E. Osborn. April 20, 1921. Poem by Rosilla E. Osborn." The original document was a typescript presented to the Centennial Camp of DUP at Bannock, Idaho by Sarah Jane Lyons. There is no submission date, so we do not know when the document was created. It was after September 11, 1924 as that is the date of Agnes Caldwell's death, and the sentence containing that death date is contained in the body of the document and was produced at the same time and with the same typewriter as the rest of the document. From this document we learn that the data obtained from Agnes Caldwell by daughter Rosilla in 1921 was transformed into typescript after Agnes' death.

Assuming that our DUP typescript is an accurate duplication of Rosilla's original "Biography of Agnes Caldwell Southworth," the following observations are made with respect to Rosilla's account of Christina and "one of the Generals" in command at "Laramie, Wyoming."

- Unlike Veara's account, Rosilla's overall narrative is not presented chronologically but jumps around from one event to another;
- In some early Mormon writings there was confusion about the geographical location of Laramie, Wyoming vs. Fort Laramie. The wording here implies that this may have been the case with Rosilla Osborn, but little matter;
- There were no Generals stationed at Fort Laramie in 1856;
- If Christina had obtained "a large ham" at Fort Laramie it was not mentioned in the several journals that have since been recognized as credible accounts of the day to day record of the Willie Company. Such an acquisition also is in stark contrast with the meager food obtained by the Company's leaders at Fort Laramie i.e., official journal entries for the Willie Company at Fort Laramie recorded: *"The Willie Company originally planned to cross the North Platte River near Fort Laramie, as most Mormon and California Trail companies did. They hoped to resupply at Fort Laramie. President Franklin D. Richards had promised help, and the handcart plan called for resupply. However, to their dismay, no supplies were waiting for them." And, "President Willie and a few other men went to Fort Laramie to purchase what provisions they could. Unfortunately, provisions were sparse. Among the provisions the men procured was a barrel or two of hard bread. This hard bread proved to be the last food the Saints ate before they ran out of food on October 20th."*

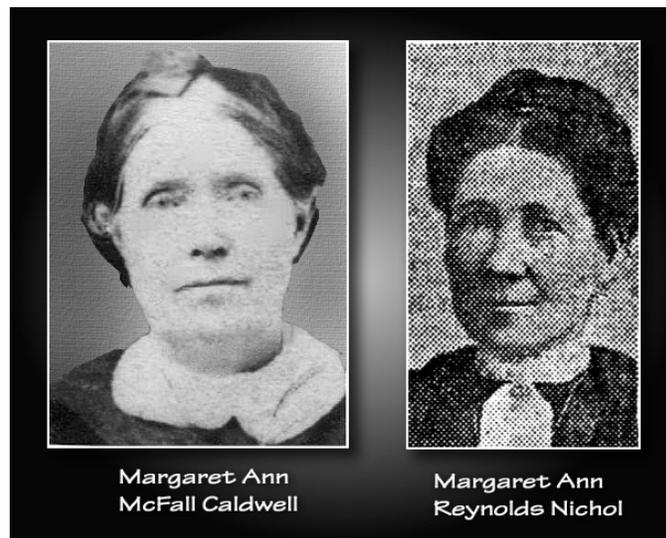
Summary of Army Trading Post Incident:

On the basis of the various accounts originating from the work of Veara Southworth, and the singular account of Rosilla Osborn, and the obvious contradiction between them, we know they both can't be right even if we cut and paste the text out of context as one recent author did. This writer is of the opinion that the incident occurred at the army trading post at Florence, Nebraska, and that Veara's description was "spot on."

As for how something like Rosilla's General-Silver Spoons-Gold-and-Ham story came about we have only to ponder these words:

"Memories evolve over the years, events gain and lose emphasis. Hindsight carries its own distortion, and attitudes fall prey to the power of suggestion." ²²

Along with the honor and courage demonstrated by Christina McNeil, she must have been a very modest and loving individual because the incident never surfaced in the several accounts of her life created by her own descendants. In respect for Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell, Christina named her second oldest daughter after her, Margaret Ann Reynolds Nichol.



Christina McNeil named her second oldest daughter, Margaret Ann Reynolds after Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell, with whom she crossed the plains in the Willie Handcart Company.

The End

²² Brad Dimock in "The Very Hard Way," Fretwater Press, Flagstaff, Arizona, 2007, page 91.