

**CHRISTINA MCNEIL REYNOLDS**

**BORN: 22 SEPTEMBER 1831**

**PLACE: METHUL, PERTH, SCOTLAND**

**DIED: 1 AUG 1901**

**MURRAY, SALT LAKE, UTAH**



## CHRISTINA McNEIL REYNOLDS

Christina McNeil Reynolds was born in Perth, Scotland, on September 22, 1832, to Daniel and Christina McNeil. She had black hair and dark eyes. By trade her father was a coppersmith and her mother a corset maker. However, when Christina was still a small child, her father died and her mother worked hard to provide for the family and young Christina worked in a factory from the time she was seven years old.

As a young woman in her early twenties Christina heard the message of the Mormon elders. Although her mother was bitterly opposed to the new religion and begged her not to accept it, after much serious study, Christina was baptized. For this action, she was refused entrance into her home. She decided she must come to America and in order to earn some money for her passage, she went to work for a Mrs. Margaret Ann Caldwell, who was a widow with six children who had also been baptized into the L.D.S. church. Mrs. Caldwell took in roomers and boarders and did dressmaking and with everyone's help they soon felt they had enough money to make the journey to Utah. Just before they planned to leave Glasgow, Mrs. Caldwell's eldest son joined the Scottish army, and since the tickets had all been purchased for the family's passage, he was left behind and his ticket was given to Christina McNeal and in 1856 they all left Scotland for Liverpool.

On the 1st of May the ship's Captain Collins received the Saints in Brambly Moore Docks, Liverpool, England and on the following Saturday, May 4, 1856, accompanied by the government inspector, a doctor and President Franklin D. Richards, they went aboard the ship, which was named the "Thorton." Just before sailing time a sister and her husband came and secretly bade her farewell. The Saints answered to the usual inspection and were all pronounced in good health. President Richards then appointed James G. Willie the Captain of the company and told the people to observe strict obedience to assure them a safe and prosperous journey and they set sail.

On June 14, 1856, the ship docked in New York Harbor and the Saints were taken to Castle Garden. Mrs. Caldwell and her children, with Christina McNeil, started out walking to find an L.D.S. church where they could attend Sunday School. It was extremely hot and Christina's nose started to bleed and try as they might it seemed there was nothing they could do to stop it. Everyone they passed offered suggestions but to no avail and finally, Mrs. Caldwell administered to her and the bleeding stopped almost immediately. It soon became known that Mrs. Caldwell had the power of healing and she was able to do much good throughout the long and tiring journey that lay ahead.

On Tuesday, June 17, 1856, the company left New York and on the 26th of June they crossed the Mississippi River and left by rail for Iowa City where they stayed until July 15th. The men were busy making handcarts and yokes and the women made tents. They celebrated their first American Holiday, July 4, 1856, with the American flag flying and giving thanks for their new adopted country.

The company was divided into groups of 100 with Captain James G. Willie at the head of all. The Caldwell family and Christina were assigned to the group under Millen Atwood. On July 15, they left Iowa for Winter Quarters at Florence, Nebraska arriving there on August 11, 1856. At Winter Quarters they were delayed repairing handcarts and tents. The wood from which the handcarts had been made had not been properly seasoned and had warped rather quickly. Many of the carts required new axles and pieces of iron had to be screwed onto the wheels to prevent the wood from wearing away. But on the 19th of August, the fourth company, under Captain Willie, left Winter Quarters along with the the Fifth Company, under Edward Martin, with whom they were to share the ordeals that lay ahead.

The Willie Company was comprised of 500 persons divided into sub groups of 100 each. They had 120 handcarts, 5 wagons, 24 oxen and 45 beef cattle and cows. To each hundred persons there were five round tents with 20 persons to a tent; twenty handcarts, or one to every five persons; and one Chicago wagon, drawn by three yoke of oxen to haul provisions and tents. Each person was limited to 17 pounds of clothing and bedding. The strength of the company was equalized as much as possible by distributing the young men among the different families to help them. Several carts were drawn by young girls exclusively, and two tents were occupied by them and such females had no male companions.

Their spirits were high as they pushed on from Winter Quarters and a reporter of the Council Bluffs Bugle wrote of these immigrants: "The best evidence of their sincerity is in the fact that they are willing to endure the fatigues and privations of a journey so lengthy... this is heroism indeed. Though we cannot coincide with them in their belief, it is impossible to restrain our admiration for their self sacrificing devotion to the principle of their faith."

However, there was some hesitation about these companies departing at so late a date. A meeting of the elders was held and Levi Savage declared that they "could not cross the mountains with a mixed company of aged people, women and little children so late in the season without much suffering, sickness, and death." And he advised delay until spring, but he was voted down and the company proceeded.

Just before they left Winter Quarters, Mrs. Caldwell's fourteen year old son Thomas, who had been helping pull the handcart, got his foot caught in a rope and dragged by a wild cow and had his collar bone broken. Christina helped with the additional load of handcart pulling.

(INSERTED HERE WOULD APPEAR THE ACCOUNT OF JOHN CHISLETT)

Mabel Reynolds Baker has written the following account of the life of Christina McNeil after she entered the Salt Lake Valley at the age of 24 years:

“Christina made her way to a friend whom she had known in Scotland, and who now lived at the Howard home in Big Cottonwood. While visiting there she met Warren Reynolds, his wife Edna and their family. On June 28, 1857, the marriage of Christina and Warren Reynolds took place in the Endowment house, and once again she was happy in a home with loved ones. Warren built a new home for Christina and in due time seven children were born to them. Everything the two families needed in the way of food and clothing was provided by the thrifty father from his garden and stock. The boys and girls of each family attended school during the winter months, and in the summer helped with the work on the farm. The two families lived close to each other and Christina and Edna assumed equal responsibilities. They had a large spinning wheel, and while one would spin yarn for a week, the other would do the cooking. All the sewing was done by hand and their shoes were made by a Mr. Tran who came to their home, sometimes staying several weeks, while he made two pairs of shoes for each member of the two families. The milking was done in n large brass buckets and it was the chore of the girls every Saturday to polish them to a gleaming finish with buttermilk and sand. Christmas was always spent together as Warren took great delight in playing Santa Claus for the little ones.

When the Edmunds-Tucker law was put into effect there were many sad times for the families, as Warren was forced to spend months away from his loved ones. Christina never complained of the hardships she had gone through in Utah for the sake of her religion, but was ever thankful for the many blessing she had received. She passed away in August, 1901 at the age of 69 years.”

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