

George William and Catherine Wooten Smith Family

Parents of the following:

Sobrina Smith Lamb
Jane Smith Livesy
Maria Elizabeth Smith
Marlon Lehi Smith
Annie Merintha Smith Hitch
Georgiana Smith Higson
George Fred Smith
Ida Smith Wilkins
Amenia Smith Park
Minnie Smith
Lucy Evelyn Smith Bennion
Alonzo Bray Smith

Prepared by Gary David Hansen
March, 2009, Provo, Utah

George William and Catherine Wooten Smith Family

Parents of the following:

Sobrina Smith Lamb
Jane Smith Livesy
Maria Elizabeth Smith
Marlon Lehi Smith
Annie Merintha Smith Hitch
Georgiana Smith Higson
George Fred Smith
Ida Smith Wilkins
Amenia Smith Park
Minnie Smith
Lucy Evelyn Smith Bennion
Alonzo Bray Smith

Prepared by Gary David Hansen

March, 2009, Provo, Utah

Table of Contents

George William and Catherine Wooten Smith and House	1
The Children of George and Catherine Who Lived in Utah	1a*
A Time Line of Some Major Events in Their Lives	2
Beginnings in Eaton Bray Parish of Bedfordshire, England	3
A Map that Shows Eaton Bray and Other Communities Nearby	3
Marriage, Baptism and Their First Children	3a
Heavy Hearts Renewed Only by Faith	3b
The Transatlantic Voyage	3c
The Clara Wheeler in the Conway Sonne book on Ships, Saints and Mariners	3d
Mormon Immigration Index-Passenger List on Clara Wheeler	3e
Artist rendition of a similar packet ship	4
Artist rendition of adults, children and luggage on the dock	5
Artist rendition of people inside one of the lower decks of a ship	5
The Overland Journey by Wagon Train Supplies Needed	6
The Role of Mormon Grove near Atchison, Kansas	6
The Milo Andrus Company of 1855	6a
Excerpts Along the Trail	6b
The Birth of Annie Merintha and the Location	7
Devil's Gate (Wyoming) from Wikipedia	7a
Picture of the Devil's Gate Gorge and the Sweetwater River	7b
Difficulties Along the Trail	7
Picture of a wagon train along a muddy trail in Echo Canyon	7a
Artist rendition of a wagon train circled	7b
Difficulties Along the Trail continued and arrival in the Salt Lake Valley	8
Artist perspective on Salt Lake City and mountains in 1853	8a
Life in Farmington, Utah	9-11
The Exodus to the Muddy Valley Mission	12
Picture of Brigham Young in his later years	12a
Residence in Holladay and Cottonwood	13
A Wonderful Landmark and Memorial	13
Entrance to Shenandoah Park Avenue and Smith Farm Memorial	13a
Close up of George W. Smith Family Farm Site Memorial	13b
Google picture of the south end of Shenandoah Park Ave. in summer	13c
Example of a Home for Sale on Shenandoah Park Ave.	13d
More detail about their property and life in South Cottonwood	14
Pictures of the large Cottonwood LDS Stake Center nearby	14a/b/c
Death, Burial and a Tribute	15
The Beautiful Wasatch Mountains to the East	15a/b
Notes on The Smith Family Farm and Location	16
Murray City Map (Generalized with major streets and highlights)	16a
The new Intermountain Medical Center Campus in Murray	16b
Appendix, Selected Genealogy Records and Reference Materials	17/18

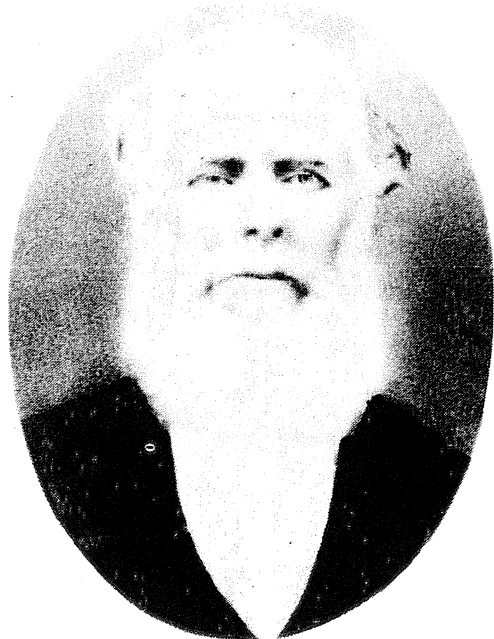
*All pictures in the text or pages with visual images are designated with a letter.

List of Credits for Selected Pictures and Artistic Images*

Beautiful packet ship with full sails, LDS Church History Library Archives	3c
Passengers and luggage on the dock, LDS Church History Library Archives	3d
Passengers below deck at tables, benches and bunks, LDS Library Archives	3e
Devil's Gate gorge & Sweetwater River, Photographer, Stuart Smith	6b
Wagon Train in Echo Canyon, Charles William Carter	7a
Pioneer wagons circled, LDS Church History Library Archives	7b
Salt Lake City, Valley & Mountains, 1853, Fredrick Piercy	8a
Brigham Young in later years, LDS Church History Library Archives	12a

* Thanks is hereby expressed to Ronald W. Read, Information Specialist Librarian, of the LDS Church History Library in Salt Lake City for his exceptional assistance and service in obtaining some visuals and references for this report.

George W. Smith - Catherine Wooten



and



family

Maria Elizabeth Marlon Leki
(died in Infancy)





Sobrina



Jane



Annie Merintha



Georgiana



George Fred



Ida



Amena



Lucy Evelyn



Alonzo Bray

George William Smith and Catherine Wooten Smith: Time Line of Events

Birth Date and Place: **George William**, May 2nd, 1823 Eaton Bray Parish, Bedfordshire, England
Catherine Wooten, September 20, 1828 Eaton Bray Parish, Bedfordshire

Marriage: December 21, 1845
Birth of 1st Child: Sobrina on April 29, 1847 in Eaton Bray
Birth of 2nd Child: Jane on October 4, 1848 in Eaton Bray

Baptism: George on October 29, 1848 Catherine on December 15, 1848
Birth of 3rd Child: Maria Elizabeth, Sep. 18, 1852, died Oct.1, 1852. Eaton Bray
Birth of 4th Child: Marlon Lehi on March 8, 1854 and he died the same day. Eaton Bray

Migration with two children: April 24, 1854 on the ship 'Clara Wheeler' from Liverpool, England

Arrival in New Orleans: July 3, 1854 after 70 days on the ocean

Boat Trip on Mississippi: Arrived on July 17, 1854 in Council Bluffs, Iowa

Wagon Train to the West: August 4, 1855 from Mormon Grove, near Atchison, Kansas in the Milo Andrus Company

Birth of Annie Merintha: September 28, 1855 on the trail near Devil's Gate, Wyoming, most likely in Natrona County. Appears not to have been born in Echo Canyon or in Utah as some records indicate.

Arrival in Salt Lake Valley: October 24, 1855 after 82 days on the overland trail

Residence in Farmington: October/November, 1855 moved near his brother Thomas X Smith

Birth of Children in Utah: All eight of them in Farmington from January of 1858 to May of 1868 Georgiana, George Fred, Ida, Amenia, Minnie, Lucy Evelyn and Alonzo

Move to the Muddy Valley: Arrived there in the fall of 1870 and stayed only until the next spring in this part of Nevada

Temporary Residence: In or near St. George starting in the summer of 1871

Returned to Northern Utah: Spring of 1873, settled in Holladay at about 2300 East 4600 South

Acquired their Farm: Sometime in 1874 in Cottonwood at 1700 East 6400 South

Final Residence: Family made bricks and built an adobe home in 1880 at about 1700 East and 6400 South in the Cottonwood area of Salt Lake County

Death of Catherine: September 14, 1883 in Cottonwood. Buried in the Murray City Cemetery, plot 16

Death of George W.: June 30, 1888 in Cottonwood. Buried, Murray City Cemetery, plot 16.

Beginnings in Eaton Bray Parish of Bedfordshire, England

George Smith was born on May 2, 1823 in the Eaton Bray Parish of Bedfordshire (County) in England. His parents were George Smith and Patience Timson. At some later time he added the middle name of William to distinguish himself from others, including perhaps his father and others who were born in or near his own generation. His brother Thomas added the middle initial of X for the same purpose. In both cases their objectives were fulfilled, to the benefit of us in later generations who are seeking to learn more about them and their families. Although he and his older brothers, Caleb, Reuben and James and one who was younger by the name of John were christened in the Wesleyan Methodist Church of the Eaton Bray Parish, his brother Thomas and two sisters, Mary Ann and Esther appear not to have been. (See the Wesleyan Church document in the Appendix)

Their father, George, is identified in the genealogical Family Group record as an agricultural laborer and their mother was reported as a School Mistress. I believe that a School Mistress would have the abilities and skills of a teacher but she could have been in charge of a school, like a principal or administrator in an American school. The two vocations of the parents of George William and his siblings would have been a practical and sustaining combination from my perspective. These two vocations could provide food for the table and food for the mind. In addition, the background provided in these fields of work would have been excellent for the support and education of their children. I don't have information on their childhood or teenage years, but it would seem that they might have learned something about raising crops, vegetables and fruits.

This agricultural background may have been beneficial to some of the brothers who did considerable work in farming during their adult lives. This could have been true of the two who came to Utah and some who stayed in England. The Parish of Eaton Bray would not have been heavily populated at the time and even today it is a very nice, rural region of small towns and low rolling hills. It is about one hour's drive to the north and slightly west of London. The Smith children should have had some significant educational opportunities, perhaps year after year until they reached a certain age, much of which could have been under the direction of their mother Patience at school or at home or both. George W. and Thomas X were both taught the skills of plaiting straw for making hats and they appear to have had considerable experience in various aspects of

How to Find Eaton Bray



doing this work. This was an alternative to farm labor and it could yield a good income for those who were skilled and fast in the work. I am sure it would have been much easier for both of them to carry on in this type of work than to become expert at farming, raising livestock and supporting a family.

Catherine was born on September 20, 1828 in Eaton Bray Parish in Bedfordshire, England. Her parents were William and Deborah Roe Wooton. She was the first born child of seven and had 2 sisters and 4 brothers. The sisters were Ann and Sabina. The brothers were Charles, Fredrick, Jesse and Jessie. Sabina died in her early childhood at the age of 3 and the others lived to adulthood. All were born somewhere in or near the Eaton Bray Parish, including the village of Edlesborough which is in the adjacent Buckinghamshire/county. The Family Group Record appears to be very incomplete with respect to where most of them died. A number of them are buried in the Murray City Cemetery including Catherine, her father William, and three of her brothers; Charles, Fredrick, and Jessie. (Appendix)

Marriage, Baptism and Their First Children

At the age of 22, George William Smith married Catherine Wooton on December 21, 1845 in Eaton Bray. When they were in England, the last name was spelled Wooton. Catherine seems to have changed it to Wooten, but the Family Group Record shows all of the siblings with the original spelling. Catherine was married when she was age 17. Within a year and a half, their first daughter Sobrina was born in Eaton Bray on April 29, 1847. By the time George William was 25 years old he had been taught by the Mormon missionaries and was baptized on October 29, 1848. Catherine had given birth to their second child, Jane Smith, earlier on October 4th of that same year and so she was not baptized until December 15, 1848. George was baptized just a few months earlier than Thomas X. who received this ordinance on April 17th of 1849. According to the genealogical record, their brother Reuben was also baptized just two months later on May 16, 1849. He was ordained a priest by Benjamin Johnson who was the first convert in the Eaton Bray Parish. However, he did not migrate to the United States and join with Thomas X. and George W. So far as I know, out of the eight siblings, only Thomas X. And George W. made the great journey across the Atlantic ocean and overland by wagon train to Utah. It was their purpose to go to Zion, join with the Saints and help build up the Kingdom of God. A different pattern emerged with respect to the Wooten family. The family history that I have read indicates that most of them migrated to the United States and to Zion.

Heavy Hearts Renewed Only by Faith

Life in England for George W. and Catherine from September of 1852 to April of 1854 was a time of great heartache and grief. Their third daughter, Maria Elizabeth was born on the 18th of September and died in just two weeks on the 1st of October. Their first son, Marlon Lehi Smith was born on the 8th of March in 1854 and died the same day. What sorrow they must have suffered after the long and burdensome months of pregnancies and awaiting these births with great anticipation. It would have been extra hard to contemplate a move across the vast ocean and landmass so far away from where these precious ones were buried. They would leave England with a great void in their hearts with such losses, but their faith in God and in the resurrection would help them endure this devastating hardship. No parent wants to have a child die before them and be required to bury them. One cannot help but realize that the grave will not yield up the body until the resurrection. I think of the sorrow of Sobrina and Jane with their hopes for a new brother and a sister shattered, as they were laid to rest and left behind. These were great burdens that many early saints and pioneer families knew from their own personal and family tragedies.

The Transatlantic Voyage

The migration to America was complicated for George and Catherine and their young daughters, Sobrina and Jane. They were first scheduled to leave Liverpool on the ship Germanicus early in February of 1854. Two things changed this schedule. I assume that the first was the death of their fourth child, Marlon Lehi. Secondly, the ship was kept at the port for maintenance and repairs, which delayed its departure. George and Catherine had been preparing for this trip for sometime. Unless it was a gift from the Wooten's or from some other source/s, they had saved up the money to pay privately for the trip for two adults and two or three children. They had not obtained support through the Perpetual Emigration Fund, which was very common among many of the saints. I don't know if there was a change in policy or funding at the time. His brother Thomas and his family and hundreds of others used such funds and paid them back as soon as they were able. George was about 31 years old and Catherine would have been 25 when they started the trip and they had obtained the money, the clothing and other possessions that were necessary.

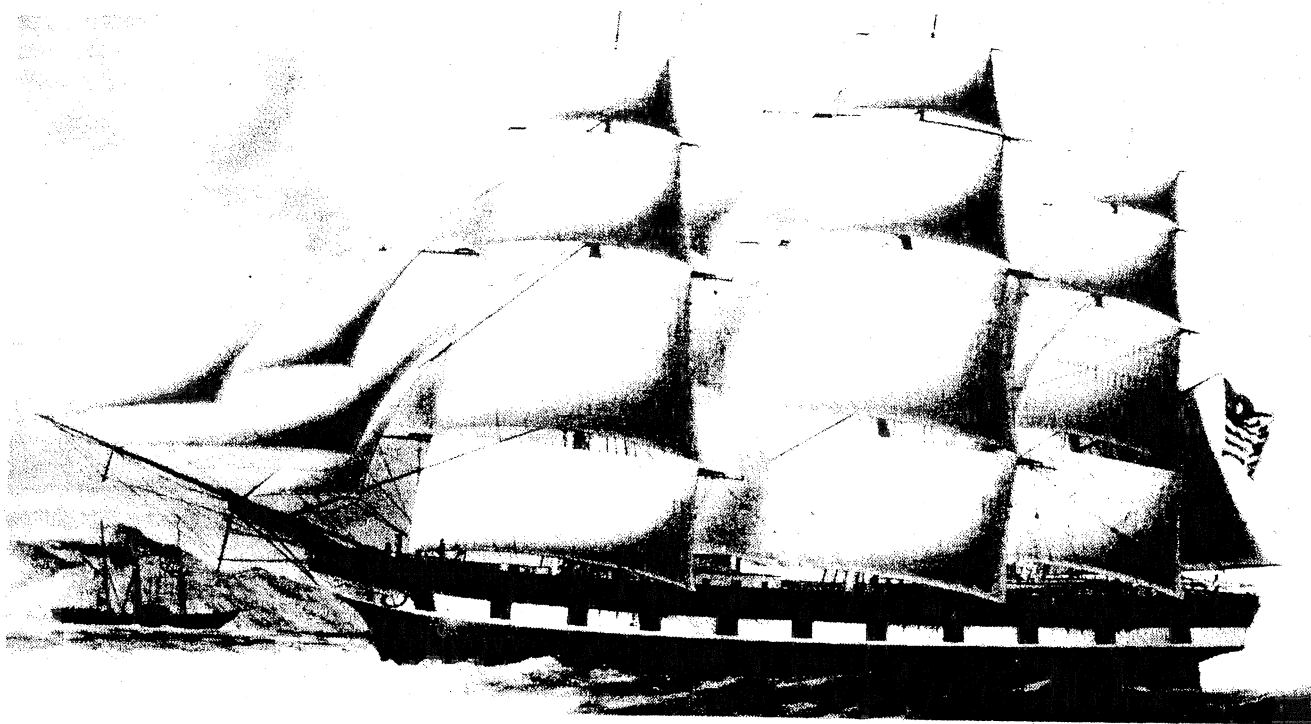
CLARA WHEELER

Ship: 996 tons: 174' x 35' x 27'

Built: 1850 by John Taylor at Medford, Massachusetts

This square-rigger sailed from Liverpool on 24 April 1854 with twenty-nine Mormon passengers. After seventy days at sea the *Clara Wheeler* arrived at New Orleans on 3 July. Virtually nothing is known of this passage, except Captain J. F. Nelson's report of three deaths.

A second voyage under Nelson's command commenced from Liverpool seven months later—on 24 November 1854. There were 422 Saints on board under the presidency of Elder Henry E. Phelps and his two counselors, Elders John Parson and James Crossley. However, bad weather forced a return to port on 30 November.



Clara Wheeler. Courtesy The Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia.

During this experience the "Saints suffered considerably from sea-sickness." After taking on more provisions the vessel again set sail on 7 December. In three days she had cleared the Irish Channel, but tragedy stalked the passage. Soon after leaving Liverpool measles broke out among the emigrants, and twenty children and two adults died at sea. Upon arrival at New Orleans on 11 January another child died.

The *Clara Wheeler* was a three-decker with a square stern and a billethead at the bow. Her original owners were William Bramhall, Thomas Horne, and Josiah S. Comings of Boston, Massachusetts. In 1856 her owners were listed as Benjamin F. Blydenbaugh and John H. Brower of New York City. Seven years later the ship was sold to foreigners.

Mormon Immigration Index - Passenger List

Name

Born

Clara Wheeler (April 1854)

AITKEN, James<1832>
BACKWOOD, John<1809>

BALLANTYNE, William<1826>
BALLANTYNE, Elizabeth <1828>
BALLANTYNE, George<1848>
BRADSHAW, Ann<1818>
BRADSHAW, Charles<1820>
BRADSHAW, Elizabeth<1843>
BRADSHAW, Ruth<1848>
BRADSHAW, Thomas<1851>
DOW, Janet <1839>

HOLDSWORTHY, Joshua <1794>
HOLDSWORTHY, Sarah <1798>
HOLDSWORTHY, Ephraim <1830>
HOLDSWORTHY, Hannah <1832>
HOLDSWORTHY, Joshua <1837>
HOLDSWORTHY, Henry <1842>
HOLLINS, John <1823>

PHILLIPS, William J.<1819>
PIKE, Fred J. <1851>
SMITH, George W.<1824>

SMITH, Catherine<1829>
SMITH, Sobrina <1848>
SMITH, Jane <1849>
TODD, John <1834>

WILMOTT, Caroline<1821>
WILMOTT, Edward<1821>
WILMOTT, Elizabeth<1847>
WILMOTT, Robert R.<1853>

Ship: Clara Wheeler

Date of Departure: 24 Apr 1854

Port of Departure: Liverpool, England

LDS Immigrants: 29

Date of Arrival: 3 Jul 1854 Port of Arrival: New Orleans, Louisiana

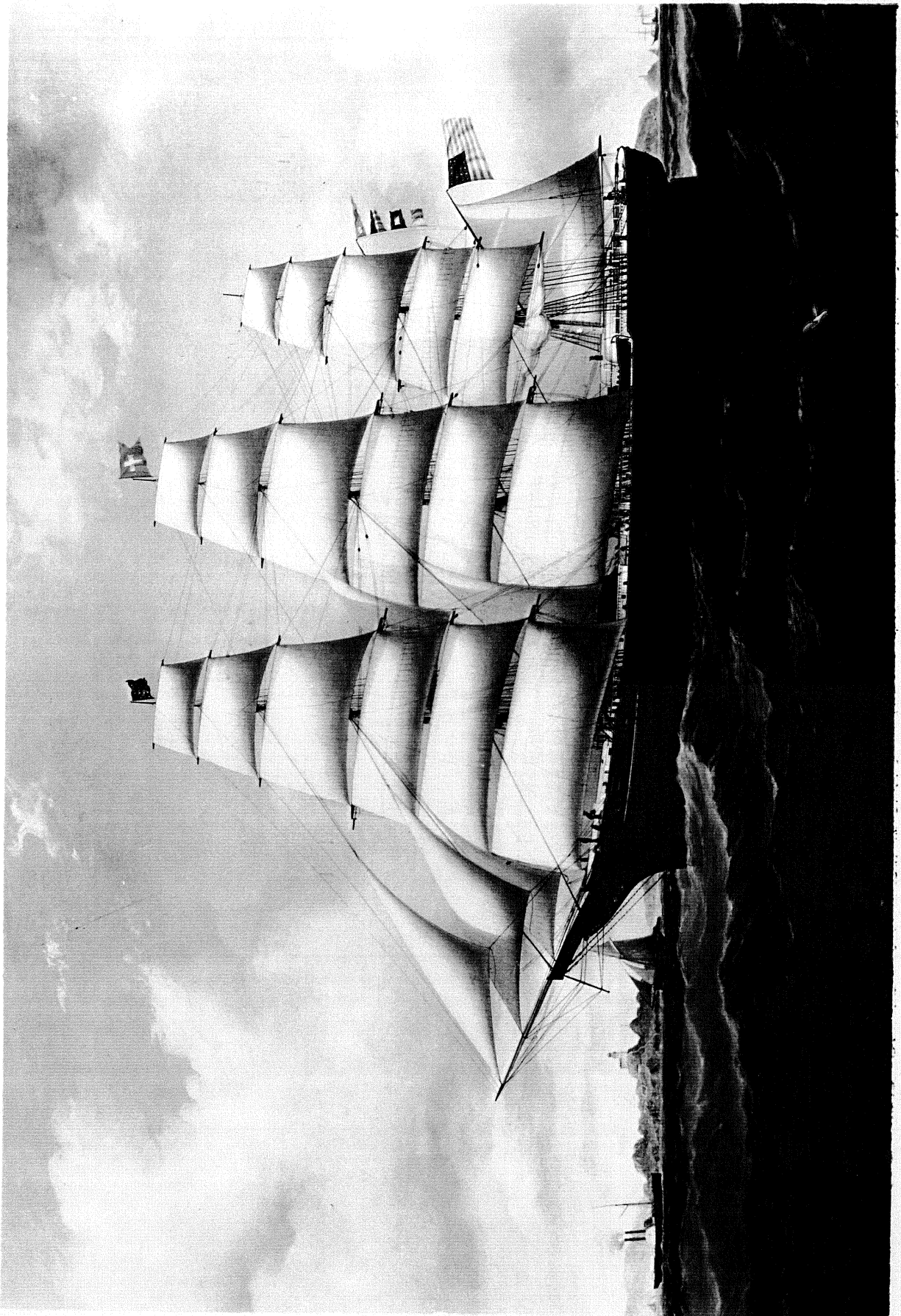
Source(s): BMR, Book #1040, p.93 (FHL #025,690); Customs #261 (FHL #200,178)

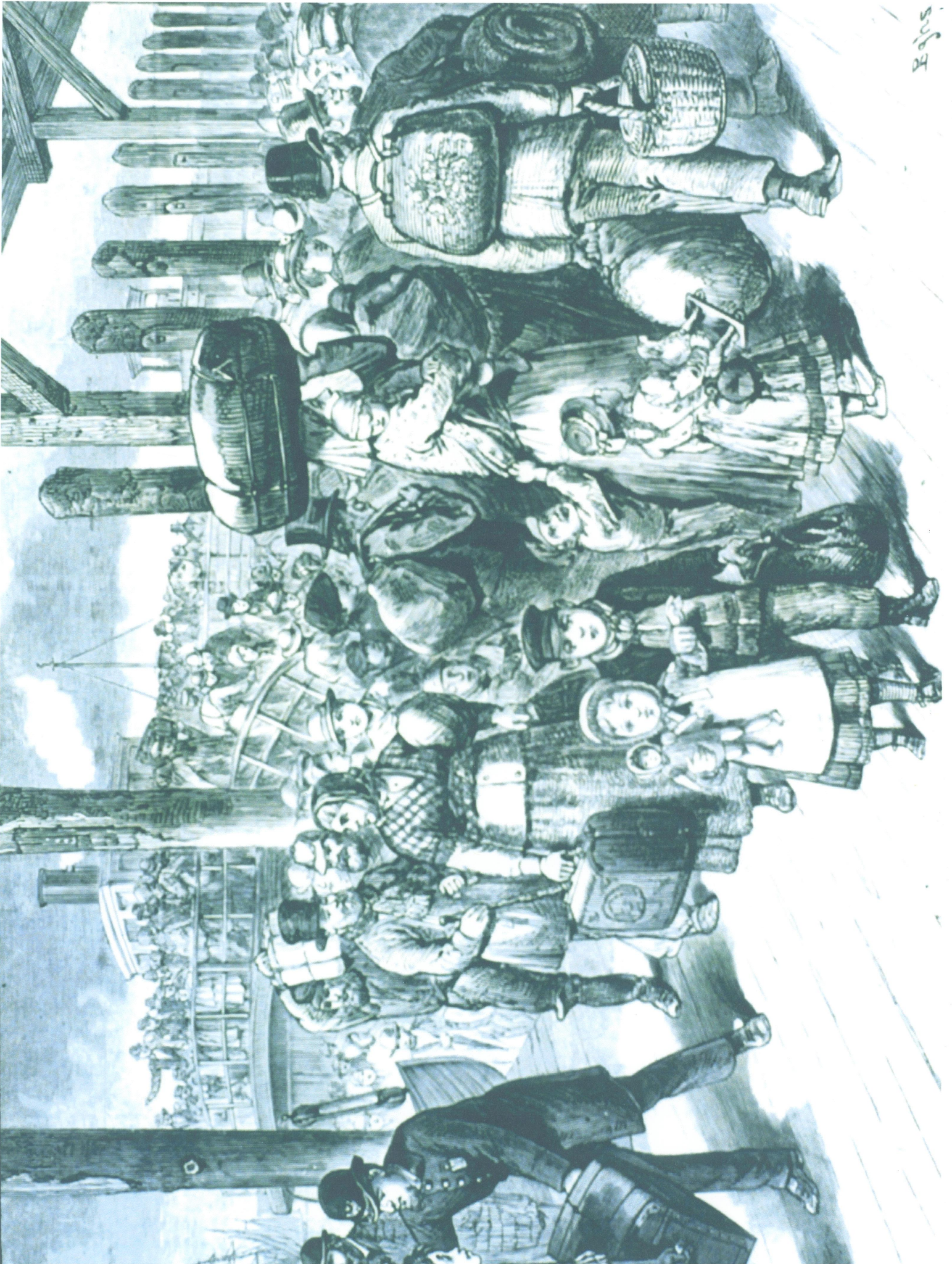
Notes: "SEVENTY-SEVENTH COMPANY. -- Clara Wheeler, 29 souls. This small company of Saints embarked from Liverpool, England, on the ship, Clara Wheeler, and set sail for New Orleans on the twenty-fourth of April, 1854; but the writer has not been able to glean anything concerning the voyage of that company. At different times in 1854, and with different ships, thirty-four members of the Church had embarked for New Orleans; some of these were lost at sea, which proved a warning to others not to embark on a voyage across the Atlantic in any but regularly organized companies of Saints. With the departure of the Clara Wheeler the emigration of Saints from Europe ceased until the latter part of the year. (Millennial Star, Vol. XVI, p.297)"

<Cont. 13:11 (Sep. 1892), p. 511>

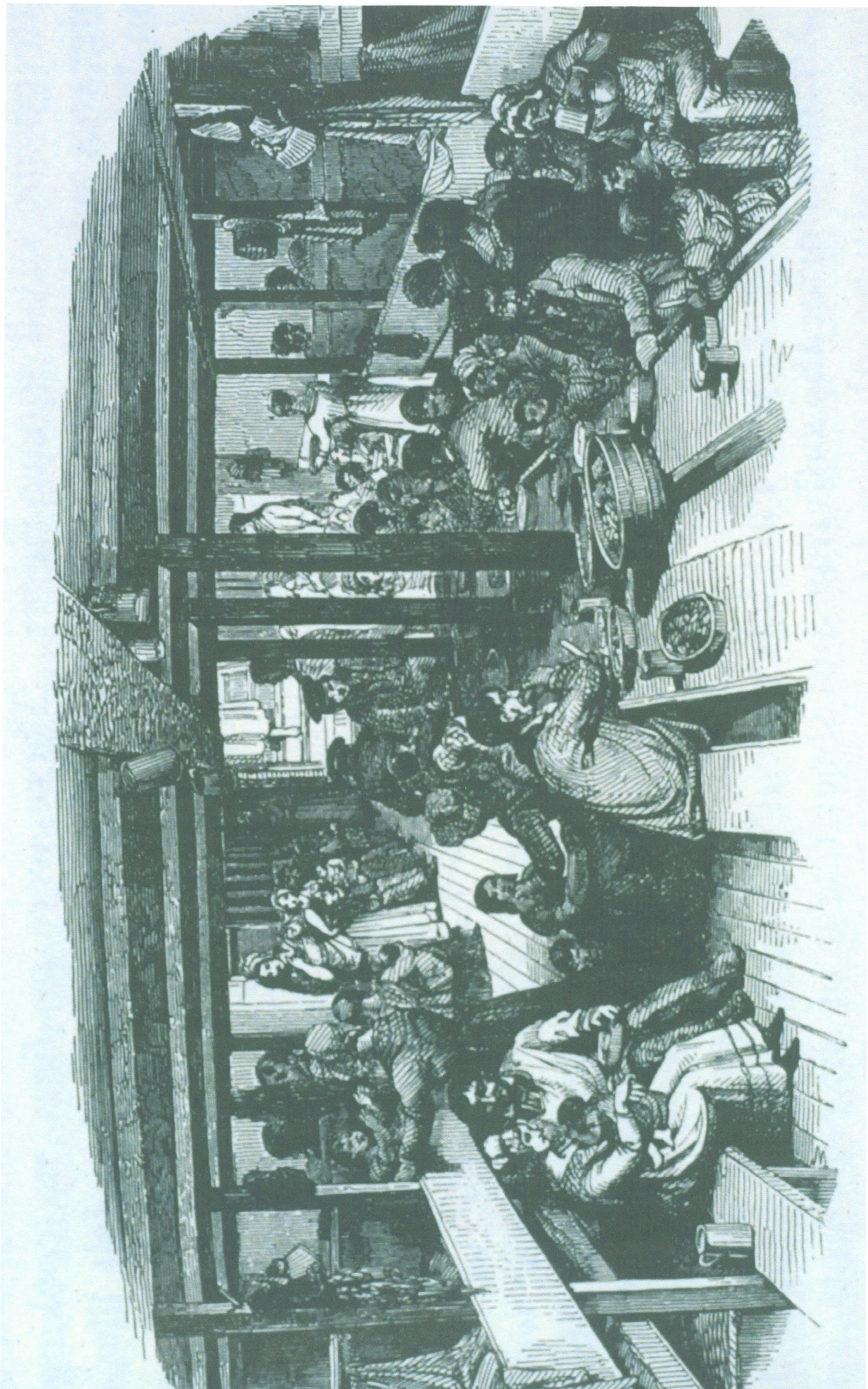
"Mon. 24. [Apr. 1854] -- Twenty-nine Saints sailed from England on the ship Clara Wheeler, bound for Utah."

<CC, p.51>





Bojov



By April 24th of 1854 they had said their good byes to family and friends and their homeland of England and boarded the ship known as the 'Clara Wheeler' and left from the famous docks of Liverpool. Whereas, Thomas and Margaret Gurney and daughter Lucy had been a part of a very well organized company of about 300 Latter Day Saints, George, Catherine and girls were with a very small group of only 29 Saints. Of course there would have been many other people on board, but not a large group who shared their faith. The Trans Atlantic travel by ship from Liverpool to New Orleans, Louisiana took 70 days. They arrived in this U.S. port on July 3, 1854. They had a lot of work upon arrival to get their possessions off the ship and to a smaller one that would take them up the Mississippi River to Keokuk, Iowa. This very short trip by comparison, lasted about two weeks. By the time they arrived on July 17th it would have been somewhat late to make plans, get a wagon, a team, and provisions, and join a wagon train to go to Utah. We don't have any record of what they did for the next year, but we could assume that they were working and preparing for the overland migration to the West and taking care of their young daughters. They had to get all the way to the Mormon Grove area of Kansas which would have been in a south, south west direction. Atchison, Kansas is in the northeast corner of the state. They could have traveled west through Iowa and then southward through Nebraska or Missouri to get to Mormon Grove. Or they could have taken a steamboat down the Missouri River if they crossed Iowa to Council Bluffs. No details are available.

The Overland Journey by Wagon Train

Basic Supplies Needed

A 'Notice to Emigrants' which affected our Smith relatives was posted in the St. Louis Luminary on 14 April of 1855. It said, "every male capable of bearing arms, must be supplied with a good rifle or other fire-arms, and at least one-half pound of powder and two pounds of lead, or shot and balls. Every person will need to have, when they leave Atchison, one hundred pounds bread stuffs, and a few pounds bacon or dried beef, and as much sugar, tea, coffee, and dried fruit as they calculate to eat during a three month's journey over the plains. All P.E. Fund passengers, including the \$40. passengers, will have breadstuffs, meat and the usual allowance of groceries furnished them at the point of outfit, but any one may add any articles of luxuries to their supplies, which they choose, for their individual use. Independent emigrants will be supplied with flour and bacon in sacks ready for the journey, at Atchison, by giving us their orders in season."

The Role of Mormon Grove near Atchison, Kansas

The place and role of Atchison, Kansas was not familiar to me until I read about it in regard to the wagon train in which George and Catherine Smith and family traveled to the west. Useful details are found in a Trail Excerpt entitled, 'The Point of Outfit for Our Spring Emigration.' It was published in the St. Louis Luminary on March 31 of 1855. "Atchison is a new town situated on the western bend of the Missouri river, in Kansas Territory, about 500 miles from St. Louis. It is surrounded by immense grazing grounds, contains abundance of good water, and is considered a healthy situation; and we have decided after mature deliberation to make this the general outfitting point for our Spring Emigration. We have located four claims about four miles from this place, where we can have a general camping ground. These claims embrace about three hundred and fifty acres of timberland, all black hickory, with some two hundred acres of beautiful prairie for farming. It is at the head of Deer creek, on high prairie land, where there is always a fine breeze, and is certainly a healthy location if one can be found within four miles of the Missouri river. The road from the Steamboat landing, except the first half mile is upon high rolling prairie with a gradual ascent. Atchison is about midway between Weston and St. Joseph, contains from five hundred to one thousand inhabitants, is said to be as well supplied with rock, coal and timber as any region of the country. These and other substantial reasons have led us to give Atchison the preference to any other point with which we are acquainted, as an outfitting post for our emigration."

The Milo Andrus Company of 1855

The records show that it was August 4th of 1855 before they were in the wagon train for the arduous journey to Salt Lake City. They were part of the Milo Andrus Company and it left from Mormon Grove, near Atchison, Kansas. This was the last of the Perpetual Emigration Fund companies for 1855. I don't know if George, Catherine and family were funded for this overland part of their journey or if they paid it up front by themselves. It would be interesting to know much more about all of their travels and preparations.

The assignment to this particular wagon train is of special interest, partly because of the circumstances of Milo Andrus, who was given the assignment to lead it just 12 hours, (the night) before it was to start and basically against his wishes. He made it clear that it was a great burden to him and unfortunately he was sick during

much of the journey. However, the logic of the choice seemed very good in that he had led such a group before, could anticipate the challenges ahead and knew what would be required of the men, women and the oxen. He was the most qualified person in the area at that time to lead them. He was clearly a seasoned and fearless man of faith with a great measure of trust in God. He had been on the Zions Camp march, he was in Nauvoo during the martyrdom, and he had been involved with the Liberty Jail episode. According to one report he was perceived as very demanding and disliked. It seems that he had reason to be such considering the lateness of their start and the risks of devastating winter storms in the rocky mountains. He knew something about how vulnerable such a group of inexperienced and under equipped pioneers could be. He had to push hard to get them to the valley before the storms of winter arrived, the trails were impassable and the vicissitudes of harsh and unpredictable weather could kill the animals and cause some of the saints to perish.

Excerpts Along the Trail

This wagon train had a difficult beginning for a number of reasons. They did not have enough experienced and well trained oxen to pull all of the wagons. Some of the animals were small and lacked training. As a consequence they required as many as four men to guide and control one team until they were broken in to the demanding work of pulling the loaded wagons. Another problem was that a U. S. Marshal required Captain Milo Andrus to help him get compensation on a debt owed by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Jedediah M. Grant. This took a lot of his time and effort to resolve the problem in the very beginning of their westward journey. Andrus handled it with considerable faith, strength and skill, calmed the Marshal down and settled the claim with some resources available in the wagon train.

The Birth of Annie Merintha and the Location

The demands of this rough, unimproved trail would have been especially difficult and challenging for women who were pregnant, particularly heavy with child in the last trimester or recovering from a delivery. Catherine was in this situation for the entire journey, with the last two months of the pregnancy burdening her steps and causing discomfort with the bumps of the wagon. She and all of the pioneer women who endured such hardships, including her sister in-law, Margaret Gurney Smith who was the wife of Thomas X, deserve the highest praise and gratitude. In spite of these hardships, of all the experiences they had along the trail, by far the most important was the birth of their fifth child, Annie Merintha, on September 28, 1855.

Devil's Gate (Wyoming)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Devil's Gate (Wyoming) is a natural rock formation, a gorge on the Sweetwater River a few miles southwest of Independence Rock. The site, significant in the history of western pioneers, was a major landmark on the Mormon trail and the Oregon Trail although the actual routes of travel did not pass through the very narrow gorge. It is accessible today from Wyoming Highway 220 (mile marker 57) between Casper and Muddy Gap, near the Mormon Handcart Historic Site and Martin's Cove.



Devil's Gate, Wyoming

Devil's Gate is a remarkable example of superposed or antecedent drainage. The Sweetwater River cuts a narrow 100-meter deep slot through a granite ridge, yet had it flowed less than a kilometer to the south, it could have bypassed the ridge completely. The gorge was cut because the landscape was originally buried by valley fill sediments. The river cut downward and when it hit granite, kept on cutting. It was a matter of pure chance that the river hit the buried ridge where it did.

The site is accessible via semi-improved hiking trails from the Mormon Handcart Historical Center at the Sun Ranch and from the old paved alignment of Wyoming Highway 220, approximately 60 miles from Casper and 12 miles northeast of Muddy Gap. It is on public land.



Her birth was reported as near Devil's Gate, Wyoming and this area is in Natrona County. From a record of this company on the trail we learn the following: " By September 13, the company was 12 miles below Fort Laramie. It then passed Laramie Peak, Independence Rock and Devil's Gate. At the latter place, on September 28, the emigrants met brethren from the Salt Lake Valley." This was the very day that Annie Merintha was born. *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel 1847-1868: Milo Andrus Company 1855*

This location is in conflict with the report in an earlier account that she was born in Echo Canyon, Utah and just 2 days from the Farmington area. Devil's Gate was a landmark site for the pioneers where the Sweetwater river cut through a tall mountain of rock over many centuries and created a very scenic place near the wagon trail. It is southwest of present day Casper, Wyoming. It is estimated to be about 200 miles from Devil's Gate to the Utah border on the overland trail. They would not arrive in the Salt Lake Valley until October 24, 1855, about 26 days after Annie Merintha was born. If they averaged only 12.5 miles per day for 24 days, allowing some down time, they would have been about 300 miles from the Salt Lake Valley.

Difficulties Along the Trail

One of the continuing concerns had to do with the oxen not being able to endure and keep up with the demands of the wagons with their heavy loads. Milo Andrus wrote to Brigham Young and told him that he hoped to obtain 10 yoke of oxen at Laramie, Wyoming to strengthen his teams. He was concerned that if he couldn't do this that the wagon train would not arrive in the Salt Lake Valley before the winter storms set in. This was a profound and continuing issue. The breakdowns of the wagons were another real concern. They could not move on unless all of the wheels were working, the axles were greased, and the wagon tongues were viable. The oxen could not travel easily over the rough rocks without the protection of shoes. Some of these issues and many other matters are discussed in the Trail Excerpts from Milo Andrus to Brigham Young, James Hart and others. These may be found on the internet site dealing with Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel.

While the wagon train was moving at least one of the oxen was knocked down and hurt by a buffalo that was part of a large herd that apparently ran right through the wagon train. What a concern that would be with small children at risk, especially if they were walking and not protected in the wagon. The good thing was that the pioneers shot three of the herd and had plenty of fresh meat to eat for several days.





There was a major battle between a U.S. army unit under the command of a General Harney and a band of Sioux Indians. During this battle Milo Andrus reported that about 120 Indians and four soldiers were killed, five soldiers were wounded, and many (58) Indians were captured. One other estimate was higher on the Indian deaths. However, the wagon train did not have major problems with Indians and many of them were friendly. Some were quite desperate and begged the saints for many different things. Some of the Pawnee Indians stole items from one or more of the wagons. It was the policy to feed those who asked for food. It must have been quite exciting to see the Indians for the first time and to not know what to expect in attitude or behavior. I suspect that some of them hoped to trade their products for things they wanted from the pioneers. (For anyone who would like to see a personal diary account of the preparation time at Mormon Grove and this particular wagon train journey, consider the Diary of Henry Stocks, 1844-1870) He had a number of interesting and informative entries. He estimated the distance from Mormon Grove to the Salt Lake Valley at 1200 miles. If this is fairly accurate, they averaged about 15 miles per day for each of the 82 days of their trek. I would say that is a fast pace for a wagon train which involved 461 people at the start.

Some of the realistic concerns of Captain Milo Andrus were realized in early October. Just after crossing the Devil's Backbone, which required a long, steep and difficult climb by the oxen, wagons, other animals and saints, they had a "dreadful" snow storm. Near Chimney Rock they lost 20 oxen and 2 cows. When they reached the Sweetwater River many more of their cattle died, partly because of a lack of feed. They had to cross this river many times and on the fifth crossing they had three inches of snow. When they reached Fort Bridger on October 15th Captain Andrus sent word to Salt Lake that he needed fresh animals. By then many of the men, women and children were almost barefoot and without adequate clothing. When they got to the Weber River they were running low on provisions to eat. As they traveled on and arrived at Emigration Canyon they were met by a welcoming party from the Salt Lake Valley and I am sure that this must have been of great encouragement to them and a source of much relief. (*This information is from various Trail Excerpts, some in the Appendix.*)

Overall, from what I have read, I think it was quite remarkable if only two elderly people were reported as having died on this wagon train and that the general level of health was quite good. Others reported serious problems with cholera at Mormon Grove and other sickness and weakness on the trail. I am grateful that Captain Andrus was true to his charge of getting these people and their resources safely and on a timely basis to the Salt Lake Valley.



This was clearly a great result for such a demanding journey by those who walked so much of the distance. No doubt, George and Catherine were very hard working all along the way, driving and leading the oxen, caring for the children, maintaining their wagon, provisions, and oxen and preparing food for the family. It was a time of anxious concern that was matched with powerful faith and many good works. I suppose that when they got to the Salt Lake Valley that they had many reasons to have a new and stronger faith and confidence in their ability to take on whatever difficult tasks and challenges would be ahead. It would have been an important empowerment for their future and for the well being of their young family.

Life in Farmington, Utah

Very shortly after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley they traveled northward a short distance of about 15 miles to the community of Farmington in the Davis County of Utah. Thomas X and his family lived there and the available biographical history shows that George and Catherine moved to within 40 rods of him. Thomas had migrated to Utah in 1853 with his wife and their children, Lucy and Orson. What a relief it must have been to be through with the 1200 mile overland journey by wagon train. It must have been a great reunion for the brothers and their families. Some of the children were of the ages where they could play together. Having cousins nearby would have been fun for them. George and Thomas would have had so much to talk about, things to share, and plans to make.

I can only imagine the detailed conversations that Margaret and Catherine had as young pioneer mothers who went through similar ordeals of giving birth while on the trail and protecting their babies from the risks and elements that could be dangerous to them. And what of their faith, that they shared and that brought them to Zion? I suppose they had many faith promoting stories to tell. Certainly they would have caught up on the family news from England and many other subjects of discussion. The paramount issue though was probably about surviving and taking care of a family in this new and relatively untamed and undeveloped frontier. Thomas X had work handling the operations of a local grist mill and perhaps some other things. The challenge would be for George to get settled and figure out how best to provide for his family in this new place. The Farmington/Centerville region in Davis County would have been a very productive agricultural area. It should have also provided opportunities in the construction fields as many new people moved in, homes had to be built and business facilities developed.

It was very close to Salt Lake City, so that many saints and travelers who would go to the settlements north along the Wasatch front would have to pass through. Bountiful was just to the south and it was developing as an important community of Davis County, under the direction of Perrigrine Sessions and other early pioneers who were starting their efforts by 1848. They were 5 years ahead of Thomas X and 7 years ahead of the arrival of George W. Smith. Sessions cleared the land for a farm in Centerville, which is just south of Farmington and he was producing significant amounts of grain. There were the very serious complications associated with the crickets that devastated many of the crops and plagued the saints until about 1855, the year that George and Catherine arrived. Thomas X did not continue to live in Farmington for very long. By 1859 he and his family moved to Logan and became an important part of the earliest pioneer settler group in the Cache Valley. Thus, he was a neighbor to his brother for only four years and then he moved about 60 miles away and helped to build a new community of Latter Day Saints on the frontier.

George and Catherine stayed in Farmington from late 1855 to the spring of 1870. This was a fairly long period where there could be some stability and continuity of work, housing and family life. They had the rest of their children in Farmington. They were born as follows:

Georgiana was first among those born in Utah, January 21, 1858.

George Fred was born on December 28, 1859

Ida was born on September 15, 1862

Amenia and Minnie were born on January 20, 1864 (Minnie died)

Lucy Evelyn was born on July 9, 1866

Alonzo Bray was born on May 18, 1868

By this time they had nine living children including the first three that survived, by the names of Sobrina, Jane and Annie Merintha. The reader will recall that they lost one daughter, Maria Elizabeth, who was only two weeks old and a baby son that died by the name of Marlon Lehi on the same day that he was born. Before George and Catherine left Farmington, their oldest daughter Sobrina was married in 1866. How dedicated George and Catherine were to the ideals of building up a family, providing for them, sharing the gospel, and helping them prepare for the future. These early saints were truly great because of this love and dedication and they will inherit a wonderful eternal glory for their profoundly important work with the precious souls of God here in mortality.

In the modern day some couples are so casual about relationships that they never marry. Others are so self centered that they are unwilling to have any children. Many married couples are willing to have only one or two children in hopes that they won't overpopulate the earth or that their children can have all of the advantages and material possessions that life can offer. A few couples plan to have and provide for 3 or 4 children. Very few now days even consider having 5 or more unless they have a traditional, large family perspective such as in many of the orthodox Latter Day Saint and Catholic families. The faithful pioneer saints with their large families surely did their part to multiply and replenish the earth, to build up Zion, and begin to prepare their children for immortality and eternal life. It was no small order and they were faithful to this infinitely important work.

According to a history provided to me this month by Keith Poelman, it was written that, "George had never been a farmer. He had worked in a factory in England where straw hats were made. ...It was necessary for everyone of the early pioneers to plant and grow most of the food for their families. ...He could never plow a straight furrow. He would always have one of the children ride the oxen hitched to the plow, to guide the animal, as he had all he could do to handle the plow." (See the Appendix for the full history) Perhaps George W. was teaching the children something about work and producing your own food, both of which were critical for survival. I would imagine that only a few men would be so co-ordinated, skilled and physically strong as to be able to control a team of oxen and a plow at the same time and create straight furrows. Anyone who tried it would quickly become less of a critic. Some who farm today have plenty of difficulty plowing a straight furrow with a tractor.

George seemed quite willing to make do with what he had and he probably sacrificed many things that would have been pleasant for himself for the benefit of his wife and children. The history mentioned above indicated that he sometimes worked in the field with a swallow tailed coat, not because that was appropriate for the job, but because it was the only one he had. Some good natured humor flowed from this as he was sometimes called, 'Gentleman George'.

Their second daughter Jane was apparently married sometime while they lived in Farmington and she did not go with the family to their new location.

The Exodus to the Muddy Valley Mission

The phenomenal work of developing many communities in various western states was going forward under the direction of Brigham Young. In the winter of 1864/65 he visited Farmington and asked for volunteers to go south beyond St. George into an area that was known as the Muddy Valley, believed to be in Arizona. By the end of May in 1865 there were fifty families that had moved to this area and a Ward was organized with Thomas A Smith as the Bishop. Apparently, he was not related to George W. Smith. (See the history about the Smith's in the Appendix for details)

This history that has been quoted earlier reported that, "Those who went to the Muddy, planted crops, they dug ditches, planted trees and molded adobes to build their houses. They made sidewalks and planted rows of Cottonwood trees along them. They planted cotton, which was sent to St. George to the factory in exchange for cloth. They built a grist mill. They planted groves of Cottonwood trees for shade, and in the years they were there, these grew to considerable size. Their adobe houses, or shanties as they called them were made of adobe and roofed with willow rafters and willow sheeting tied on with twine and thatched with tuelles from the swamp. The summers were very hot and it was almost impossible to sleep inside. Harvest time was from May to mid June, and wheat sown in the fall produced heavily, as much as 60 bushels per acre, of excellent quality. Considerable prosperity followed the activities of these people. In 1869 there were 600 people living there." The Muddy consisted of St. Thomas, St. Joseph, Overton, West Point and Junction City.

The records do not fully report on the motivations that influenced George and Catherine to go to the Muddy Valley, which they did in the spring of 1870. The retrospective accounts about Ida Smith Wilkins, their daughter and George Fred, their oldest son indicate that they were called by Brigham Young to go there. (See the full accounts in the Appendix) What an effort it must have been to scale down to the essential possessions that they could take with them and load them on a wagon pulled by a team of oxen and walk the 300 or so miles with their animals to this new location. It would take many weeks and great effort to get there. They finally arrived in the fall of 1870. During that season, Brigham Young had visited and found that there was a survey of the state boundaries and they were actually in Nevada. They had been paying taxes to Arizona and now Nevada authorities wanted them to pay the back taxes to them. It was a very difficult situation and Brigham advised them that they could leave the area if they agreed to do so and abandon the Muddy Valley.