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Biographical Sketch

of

Catherine Cunningham Adams

Taken from other biographies and Church History

Arranged by Granddaughter La Belle Andersen Ingersoll

Pioneer Year 1856

Brother Willie's handcart company

Born in the village of Borland near Dysart,

Fifeshire, Scotland, 17 August 1838

Married Arza Adams on 7 March 1859 in the Endowment House,

SLC, UTAH

Died 10 December 1912

Catherine Cunningham Adams was born in the village of Borland near Dysart, Fifeshire, Scotland, August 17, 1838, the daughter of James Cunningham and Elizabeth Nicholson Cunningham. She was one of a family of five, Robert, George thru whose efforts American Fork became the first town in Utah to adopt the free school system. Elizabeth, Margaret and Catherine the subject of this sketch.

The Cunningham in Scotland was also a home for the Mormon Elders laboring there. The mother many times borrowing money to help them in their labors. Some of the family worked in the coal pits. Catherine worked in the mills and factories from the age of twelve until she left that country.

In the Spring of 1856 the family emigrated to America. They boarded the ship "Thornton" with seven hundred other passengers, most of whom were Latter-Day-Saints. Five hundred of these people expected to reach their destination, Salt Lake City, that season. The ocean voyage lasted for six weeks, they then landed in New York. By steamboat they traveled to Albany, New York and from Albany to Iowa City, Iowa by rail, on the Chicago Rock Island and Davenport Railway, arriving there the latter part of June, 1856. The day of their arrival they experienced a terrific storm, which they endured without any, shelter what so ever.

They remained in Iowa City five or six weeks, when an order came for them to cross the plains in Brother Willie's hand cart company. They traveled from Iowa City to Winter Quarters, the starting point of their hand art journey, by ox team a distance of three hundred miles.

James G. Willie's company numbered between four and five hundred souls mainly from Great Britain and Scandinavia. While at Florence or Winter Quarters the question whether they should pursue their journey or stay there for the Winter was discussed. The majority were in favor of continuing on the way so the decision was reached and they determined to go on rather than remain there thru the winter. They fully hoped to reach Salt Lake City before the chilling blasts of winter. This was a fatal error but one of course

unexpected, for the winter season set in much earlier that year, and most severe.

They left Winter Quarters the 19th of August. The fore part of the journey passed pleasantly enough for such a trip, except for the breaking down of carts and feelings of anxiety caused by Indian raids. Notwithstanding all the difficulties and dangers in their path, they pressed on with all possible speed. In the fore part of their journey they made favorable daily progress, but as they continued, and the roads became more rough and repairs were constantly necessary, their progress was delayed. Due to the lightness of their hand carts and the hasty manner in which they were constructed of unseasoned wood they began to fall to pieces before they were well on their way, and to repair them required time.

While on the Platte in the middle of September, the first frosts of the season were encountered, which increased in severity day by day. September 30th they arrived at Fort Laramie, five hundred miles east of their destination, and the next day continued on their way. From this point on they encountered the hardest part of their travel, and winter was fast approaching. Their rations were growing less and restrictions were placed on them. What was worse, due to the loss of conveyances and the heavy grades they had to climb when they reached the mountains they had to discard a portion of their burdens. Articles of clothing and bedding had to be left on the way, that progress might be made. Improperly clad and with poor shelter, they were exposed to the piercing winds and bitter cold of the early winter storms. They cause them severe suffering and conditions made it so that many more delicate were placed in untimely graves along the way. Under such adverse conditions they were forced to push on, for emergency demanded haste lest the grim and merciless inter embrace them in the grip of death. With the help of the brethren, and the supplies from the valley, the survivors of this train and the one following that suffered even more greatly, arrived in Salt Lake City. The Willie Company November 9th and the one following three weeks later.

On reaching Salt Lake City they were kindly cared for and after a few days rest, Catherin with her parents, brothers and sister were

sent to American Fork to live. Catherine was 18 years of age when this journey was completed.

On March 7, 1859 she with Marilla Olney became the wife of Arza Adams in the Endowment House at Salt Lake City. Eleven children were born to them, seven girls and four boys. Catherine was very charitable giving to relatives and friends from their abundant store of flour and meal from the Adams Grist Mill and pork and beeves, which they raised.

Her later years were busy ones, helping to rear five boys left motherless by the deaths of two of her daughters. After fifteen years of their care, when she could see her life was drawing to a close, they were her one concern. She died December 10, 1912. Her life well spent.