

S U O

BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM TAIT AND ELIZABETH XAVIER TAIT.

Written by Hattie Mulliner Hunter for the Daughters of Utah Pioneers to be held at Cedar City, Utah, Jan, 8, 1928.

William Tait was born in Dawn, Patrick, Ireland, on the 3rd day of November, A.D., 1818. He was baptised into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the City of Glasgow, Scotland. in the year, 1841, and in the year 1842 sailed for India in her Majesty Queen Victoria's service as a regimental drill master. He remained in the service until 1854. During his stay in India he used his means of spreading the truth and kindly aiding the Elders. While there he married Elizabeth Xavier, who was the daughter of James and Annabella Xavier. She was born in Bombay, India, Dec. 23, 1833, and her childhood and youth were spent there. Her parents were people of high rank, belonging to the nobility of the country. and she was raised in the lap of luxury. She entered college very young and was graduated in the year 1847 when only 14 years of age. The marriage took place Jan. 21st, 1850, when Elizabeth was seventeen years old. In the year 1852 she was baptised into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints. Her people begged of her not to join the Mormon Church, and threatened to disinherit her, which they did later when they found she could not be changed in her ideas. She was the only member of her family to join the church. She and her husband remained in India until the year 1855, during which time two children had been born to them. They were very kind to the Elders and entertained them in their home. Among others notably were Elder Amos M. Mussen and Elder Hugh Findlay, the Latter with whom William Tait sailed to America, in the year 1855, in the Ship, "Victoria" finally landing in San Francisco, from which point he traveled overland walking much of the way over the old Mormon trail to Southern Utah. He located in Cedar City, on the 6th of March, 1855.

His wife did not come with him as she was in delicate health, they thought it best for her to wait till the next year and he come on and prepare a place for her to live. Before she left she buried one child, a little boy who died of cholera. He was in the yard in the morning and a few hours later he was a corpse. The eldest, a boy, came to America with his father. In the spring of 1856 Elizabeth Tait sailed for America. When she was leaving her people again begged and pleaded her to remain with them and they would take care of her and her baby girl, who was born after her father left for America. They told her she would never want for anything, but all they said did not keep her from proving true to the gospel which she had embraced and the man whom she had married. So with what she could conveniently carry with her of clothing and household goods she embarked.

While crossing the ocean her baby girl was taken ill and died and was buried at Liverpool, England. This was one of the hardest of her trials to bear and she felt as if she could not go on and leave her baby, but the president of the Mission there was so very kind to her, in her hour of sorrow that she decided to go.

She arrived in Iowa City in July 1856, this being the outfitting point of the hand cart company. She crossed the plains in Captain Willies Company, which left Iowa City on July 15, 1856, and was one of the last of the historical hand-cart companies to reach Salt Lake City, arriving there in November 9, 1856. The reason for their late arrival was not fully understood. They might have reached the end of their journey with little suffering but for the early advent of an unusually severe winter. Its approach being felt in Utah early in October, relief parties were organized and sent out to meet the Emigrants, taking with them wagon loads of clothing, bedding and provisions, scores of brave men, at the risk of their own lives went

forth to rescue their unfortunate fellows; struggling thru deep snows and piercing winds along the Platte and Sweetwater rivers. the full tale of suffering endured by the emigrants before relief could reach them has never been uttered.

William Tait who arrived in Cedar City in March went with the relief parties to meet his dear wife whom he knew was with Captain Willie's Company, which company was suffering from Cold and starvation. When the good news of the arrival of the relief parties reached camp it was not long before all had heard the glad tidings and all who were able to leave their beds turned out to see them, shouts of joy rent the air, strong men wept of joy, and women fell upon them and deluged them with kisses.

How great was the joy of Elizibeth Tait when she saw her husband and how hungry and poorly clad she was after pulling her hand cart over hill and plain. Much of her load had been discarded along the way for she was too worn out and foot sore to pull it to the end of the journey. The beautiful clothes and jewlrey that she had brought with her from India were thrown away for it was impossible to haul anything but what was absolutely necessary. Grandma Tait told many stories of her experiences crossing the plains. Few of which can be remembered.

She said that when provisions reached them they were all so hungry and wild for food that they were allowed to have only a spoonful of potatoes at a time and how good they were, they could have eaten them all at one meal if they had had what they wanted.

She related an experience she had while crossing the plains which is as follows: One day when the company had sopped for dinner, she and another lady, a companion of hers, were so weary and foot sore they decided to go out a little way from camp and lie down and rest while they were stopped, which they did and being so tired, when they went to sleep it was impossible for them to wake up until

When she came to Cedar CITY she could not make a batch of bread, as her people had always had servants to do their work. Because of this fact it was very difficult for her at first to endure the hardships that the people had to pass through in those days.

But she never lost faith in the gospel and always attended her meetings when she was able to do so. She was reserved and those who knew her say she was very much a lady. She did very little public work as she was in delicate health most of her time while raising her family. She stayed at home and kept things going while her husband did the public work.

Shortly after his arrival in Cedar City, William TAIT was appointed by Col. William H. Daine as Drill Master of the Tenth Regiment of the Nauvoo Legion in which service he was an efficient and file of his regiment. He also taught the sword exercises and ~~mountain~~ are living today who remember with pleasure the happy hours spent in Captain Tait's school.

Dressed in his regimentals he presented a splendid appearance and his voice was as clear as a bell. He also was an efficient Sunday School worker, having in charge of the Primary school for many years. He was very fond of children, and they learned to love him. Some of his scholars at his funeral manifested their love for him by bringing beautiful garlands of flowers.

As soon as it was convenient for him he took his wife to the Salt Lake Temple where they were sealed for time and all eternity.

They also worked for their dead relatives for a number of years. They made trips to the St. George Temple to do the work for the dead.

Grandfather Tait did not accumulate a great amount of wealth as did many other early settlers of Cedar City. Not having the financial ability that some others had. He gave fortunes away in real estate that he sold for almost nothing. He helped to build the Old Fort and owned five acres of land there on which he raised

some small grains, potatoes and vegetables.

When the Old Fort was abandoned he secured a home in the central part of town near Main Street and lived there a number of years, and later bought 2 lots on first east where they lived the remainder of their lives.

One of the most valuable pieces of land he ever owned was five acres in the west field north of there the B. A. C. now stands. He also secured more land in the South field and still later owned some in the North Field. He also had some cattle and a few horses. The day before his death he did his daily chores as usual. About one'clock in the night he sat up in bed, saying it was difficult for him to breathe. He remained in this position until day break, when he was lifted from his bed and placed in a chair, where he calmly passed away about 8 A. M. on October 29, 1896.

He died a member of the High Priest's Quorum. He had borne hundred of testimonies, was a lover of good meetings and good music.

He left a wife and six children, His death was a terrible shock to his wife and family for they had lost a wise counselor. All their children married but one, a bachelor son who took care of his mother until she died, Her death occurred after a lingering illness at the home of her daughter, Mrs. John Day of Enterprise, on Sept. 7, 1914.

Funeral services were held in Cedar City Tabernacle, Sept. 10, 1914.

There are living today three children, 32 grandchildren, 75 great grandchildren and 2 great great grand children.