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TOOELE COUNTY COMPANY
DAUGHTERS OF UTAH PIONEERS
TOOELE, UTAH

HISTORY OF
MARY PRICE HOWELLS ADAMS

1833 1873

Emma J. Atkin Camp

Tooele County Company
Daughters of Utah Pioneers

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HISTORY OF MARY PRICE HOWELLS ADAMS

In the town of Lestershire, England, on May 14th, 1833, there arrived at the home of Job and Mary Howells, two bundles of joy in the persons of twin daughters who were christened Mary Price and Martha Price, likely in similitude to the famous Mary and Martha of scripture, but unlike them, separation soon came for Martha was summoned by the Angel of death, leaving Mary the sole comfort to her bereaved parents. This daughter was cherished by her parents and grew to full womanhood. She was also cherished by the Lord and given the privilege of hearing and knowing the truth of Mormonism, which resulted in her becoming one of the handcart pioneers of Utah, as well as the Mother of sister Annie Elizabeth Adams Gillespie, who is with us tonight.

Mary Price Howells, as a child, worked in a cheese and butter factory at Lestershire. It was while in this employment that the message of the Gospel reached her heart and she received baptism at the hands of Elders. Her parents also embraced the restored truths as well as her brother Benjamin Howells, all of whom are listed on the honor roll as Tocoale Pioneers.

Apparently sister Howells stayed in England, after baptism, only a sufficient length of time to acquire money to assure her trip to Zion, for on March 28, 1857, she sailed from Liverpool, on the sailing ship "George Washington" with a group of Saints.

Being lonesome and among strangers, sister Howells sought the companionship of other young ladies on board the ship. As a result of this seeking, there grew an eternal love among Miss Howells and Miss Sarah Cross, who later became the Mother of our late President, C. Alvin Crme, and Miss Ann James, which never grew cold in the life and in our belief extends into eternity.

Landing at New York, the emigrants continued west to Council Bluffs, where the meager means of Sister Howells afforded only handcart transportation and this in connection with another party. Handcart harnesses were used, according to the custom and this young lady, although very small in stature, assisted in pulling the handcart by one of these crude pulling contrivances for the entire distance across the plains. To her and her companions, the journey was a series of miracles. Due to the pulling of the handcart, Sister Howells would become so exhausted and disheartened at the camp stops at noon and again at night, that she would fall to the ground in a weakened condition and her companion Ann James, would pray over her, asking God to give the frail little soul the physical power and courage to reach Zion. These prayers were answered, for each time Sister Howells was rejuvenated and miraculous strength was added so that she could continue to another stopping place. It was actually as great a miracle in the eyes of these two struggling young women as the daily supplying of manna to the children of Israel and this testimony they often bore in later years.

This weary band of heroes and heroines, officially known in church history as the Israel Evans Handcart Company, finally arrived in Salt Lake City, September 12th, 1857, weary, ragged, hungry, footsore and bleeding from the rigor of this memorable journey. Someday, when all is written, the pilgrims forming these companies, will exceed in glory the exodus of Israel under Moses, as faithfulness remained with them in fatigue and hunger while our Father and God found it necessary to supply manna and speak from the mountain to keep Israel on their journey.

Only two days after arriving in Utah, this being September 14, 1857, Sister Howells came to Tocoale and she and John Adams, sweethearts in their native England, were united in wedlock by the late Elder John Shields, Tocoale City's

first bugler. On March 18th, 1865, Brother and Sister Adams received their endowments and were sealed for eternity at the Old Endowment House, under the hands of the late Elder George S. Cannon.

The Adams family lived in a log cabin at the corner of 3rd South and 1st West streets and were living in happy anticipation of the construction of a new home, which by the way is the rock house now standing on this same corner. On July 4th, 1870, boys playing in Brother Adams barn across the street from this home, set it afire and the community being congregated for the celebration, were unable to arrive in time to save the property. Within the building had been stored all of the finished lumber for the new home which had been secured from the local canyons and seasoned for many months. The place also contained the provisions and clothing for the entire family.

Brother and Sister Adams had planned joyfully to be in the new home at another visit from the stork, expected in September, but the fire had blasted this hope at the same time it brought distinction to Sister Gillespie, our beloved guest to-night, who now can boast of having been born in a log cabin September 26, 1870.

It may be stated here that the unusual practice followed then, by the Midwives was to require a new mother to arise from her bed of confinement and do her own work on the third day. This was the requirement of Sister Adams at the birth of each of her children, including Annie Elizabeth. It may be stated here also, that Sister Howells, grandmother of Sister Gillespie was a Midwife by profession and practiced in her native England as well as after arriving in Utah.

The fire delayed moving into the new home for about two and one half years and it was with delight that the Adams family found their dreams realized. Another baby was expected by this time and Sister Adams, who was found constantly among the sick, aiding them, became ill herself, likely through contagion and so completely did this sap her vitality that at the birth of the baby daughter, December 22, 1873, both gave their lives. It was a sad Christmas for the Adams family and the only recollection that Sister Gillespie, who was then but two and one half years of age, has of her mother is one or two incidents occurring at her death and funeral.

Within another two and a half years, Brother Adams married Sarah Elkington, a girl of eighteen years and a recent emigrant from England. She was brought into the home as a mother for his family and brought the only remembered Mother love into the life of Sister Gillespie.

As far as pioneer schools of this City were concerned, Sister Annie Adams Gillespie was given a liberal education which was principally training in the three "R's". A. J. McCustian was her first teacher and Daniel D. Houtz her concluding instructor. On June 5th, 1879, she was baptized by William H. Lee, Sr., and confirmed the same day by James Donaldson, Sr.

Due to the huge orchards and gardens owned by her father, Sister Gillespie had the manual responsibility of assisting him in all of this work. Before daylight, she could be found in the orchard picking fruit, some of which was sold to peddlers who left at sunup for the mining camps to the south, including Stockton, Ophir and Mercur. Following the early morning picking, all fruit which was not perfect, was taken by Sister Gillespie and her brothers and sisters and put for drying racks which in itself was a huge job, but brought needed cash at Teasdales Store in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In the rush of the season "Peach Cutting" parties were held with many bushels passing under the fingers of young people during the course of the evening and the final reward was a molasses candy pull.

When Sister Gillespie reached the age of 16, she started to become amused at a young bashful Scotch lad who insisted on hanging close to her at the candy pulls and for six years he became more persistent with his attentions until she could figure no other way out but wedlock, so she married Hugh Alexander Ross Gillespie on October 20, 1892, with Hugh S. Gowans officiating at the civil ceremony. It was a happy marriage and Sister Gillespie did her share to aid in establishing and providing for a home by following her trade as a dressmaker which she had learned at the hands of Betsy Gowans Lyman, a daughter of the late Hugh S. Gowans. Little did the young couple realize the Gethsemane that awaited them in the following years of their lives.

The first child was a son, Alex A. The second was a girl who died in infancy. A third, a beautiful daughter brought added joy to the home. For three years the parents watched with delight the development of this promising daughter who was exceptionally strong and robust. Then, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, the little daughter, whose name was Sarah Edna, was stricken with spinal meningitis and for 19 years Sister Gillespie remained in constant attendance at her side, giving every assistance possible and laying her very life on the altar of sacrifice until the angel of death said "It is enough" and released the spirit of the girl from its mortal prison during the flu epidemic of 1913. In this 19 years, Sister Gillespie never even as much as left her home, while Brother Gillespie labored constantly and the greater portion of his means went toward medicines and other incidents for the care of this afflicted child. They proved themselves capable of the supreme sacrifice of laying their life down for another as so beautifully portrayed by the Savior wherein it is quoted "And greater love hath no man than he who lays down his life for another". Sister Gillespie completely lost contact with the Community during these long years and many who had not seen her at her home, believed her a stranger when she again started social contacts.

This was not to be the only sacrifice, for Brother and Sister Gillespie, for their daughter Katharine, who had reached the age of 19 and who had become one of the most accomplished scenic oil painters ever to attend the Tooele High school, was taken ill right at the end of her senior year and lingered for ten months of a heart ailment when death called her home on December 19th, 1924. This was their last daughter and a terrific blow, but through it all, the Lord gave them testimony after testimony to buoy them up.

Since the decrease of her home duties has permitted Sister Gillespie to re-engage in church and civic work, she has and now is affiliated with the Relief Society as a block teacher, a life member of the Genealogical Society and a member of the Emma J. Atkin Camp of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

Alex A. Gillespie and John A. Gillespie, both of Tooele are the two living members of the family, four children of the former and two of the latter make up the six grand children and there are four great grand children.