



Eliza Hughes Evans, A New Biography

By Margot Seymour Schulzke

With sincere appreciation for--and generous borrowing from--the accounts of her granddaughter, Winnifred Williams Carrell (1984) and the Maxwell-Seymour Family History, plus added comments from Eliza's daughter Phebeth Evans Seymour to various family members. Margot is a great-granddaughter of Eliza Hughes Evans and granddaughter of Phebeth Evans Seymour.

Eliza Hughes Evans was born in Leominster (pronounced Limster), Herefordshire, England, on Oct. 30, 1853 to James Hughes and Elizabeth Swallow. Eliza was next to youngest in her family. According to daughter Phebeth Evans Seymour, there were twelve children in the family, eight sisters and at least four brothers.¹ Three or perhaps four of the boys died in infancy; one survived to the age of twenty, when he died of small pox.

One brother "died when she was small, with small pox. . . . My grandmother went to visit him, talked to him through a window. It was good she went and saw him,

¹ As reported by the Maxwell-Seymour history as well as Phebeth's comments directly to two granddaughters, Joan Seymour Hamblin and Margot Seymour Schulzke.

because he was dead the next night. All this happened when she was a little girl.”² This may have been her brother John, who died of small pox a day short of being twenty. He was married by then and likely living away. Eliza would have been a month away from her 11th birthday.

Her father was a shoemaker who employed some twenty workers in his shop in Leominster.



James Hughes' shoemakers hammer, which he brought with him from Leominster, Herefordshire, England. He continued in that trade after his arrival in Utah. The hammer is still in the possession of family members.

Eliza's paternal grandparents lived a few miles away in the green and rolling hills of Herefordshire, in King's Pyon—a tiny village where her grandfather, also named James Hughes, served as the parish clerk. The tombstone for grandparents James Hughes and Catherine Colcomb still stands, beside the entrance to the tiny parish church.³ The church dates from the 13th century.

² Winnifred Williams Carrell, granddaughter. There are two brothers named James Thomas Hughes in the christening records, the first born in 1842, the second in 1849. It could not be the first one, as he died at less than one year. It may have been the second--or yet another brother who died young, and for whom we have no information.

³ Margot visited the village of King's Pyon three times, 1985, 1987 and the last in 2000, on that trip accompanied by her sister Joan S. Hamblin. The parish church and the tombstone of their 2nd great grandparents still stood, and all appeared to remain much as it had for generations.



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Leominster is part of what is called "the black and white village trail," a string of ancient towns in Herefordshire, marked by a distinctive style of half-timbered houses. These houses were often constructed of oak, sea-brined ship timbers; the timbers themselves and the ships that were made of them often dated to the 12th century. The houses date from the 13th to the 17th century. We were invited into one of them that was built in the 1200s, next door to the little church in King's Pyon.--MSS



King's Pyon church, the James Hughes-Catherine Colcomb tombstone

Eliza was twelve years old when her mother died. Around that time or earlier, as accounts vary--like many young girls of the time, Eliza was sent to work in what

Phebeth described as a nickel factory,⁴ where pewter plates were made. The production of pewter usually involved not only nickel but also lead.⁵ Both are toxic heavy metals,⁶ and probably account for Eliza's long-term ill health.

She developed an illness—due either to a heart ailment or to the fumes in the factory. Whatever the cause, the illness threatened her life, and her father was advised that taking her to a different climate might save her. Her older sister Lucy, with her husband George Bernard Taylor, had already emigrated to Utah.⁷ It was certainly her father's intent that he and the children who wished to would follow Lucy, as he could afford to send them, in keeping with the advice of the early Church leaders to gather to Zion. But he declined to go without his beloved Elizabeth, who had not accepted the gospel. He remained with her until she passed away.

James Hughes had been a member of the Church since June 8, 1841, joining in a time and place where Wilford Woodruff as a missionary in Britain had remarkable success. The family lived about 20 miles northwest of Castle Frome and Benbow Farm. Many of the new converts quickly became missionaries themselves, baptizing and ordaining.

“John Benbow, a wealthy farmer . . . belonged to a large group that had broken away from the traditional denominations of that time.” During a few months in 1840, “Wilford Woodruff preached to and baptized all the members of that breakaway group except for one man—about 600 people. And he baptized more than 1,200 of other denominations. Many of those baptized sold their land and possessions and left England to gather in Nauvoo, where they became the stalwarts of the Church.”⁸

“John Taylor, writing from Liverpool about this time, provided Church leaders in the United States with a glimpse of Wilford Woodruff's activity: ‘Elder Woodruff, has lately left the Potteries [in Staffordshire] where he was and has gone to another neighborhood, and is making Methodist preachers scarce; he baptised 32 persons in

⁴ Phebeth Evans Seymour, in conversation with Margot Seymour Schulzke, between 1958-62.

⁵ Pewter manufacture generally involved the use of both nickel and lead, both of those being toxic heavy metals.

⁶ “Lead is particularly harmful to young children, producing permanent effects to the brain and kidneys.” Elsewhere we find that nickel fumes are carcinogenic, along with other serious side effects. www.mdconsult.com/books.

⁷ George Bernard Taylor, from his personal history. They were married shortly before departing England. Nine years later, Lucy's youngest sister Charlotte became one of Taylor's polygamous wives.

⁸ “Following Wilford's Way,” by Janet Thomas, lds.org.

one week; thirteen of them were Methodist preachers.”⁹ These pastors led the way, and many of their congregations followed.

Willard Richards and Brigham Young were also in the area, also having great success, preaching and baptizing. Many of those the apostles taught and baptized emigrated to Utah soon after their conversion in 1840-41. But some, like James, remained behind.

In this context, it is likely Eliza was baptized in Leominster before her 1868 departure, but the only baptism on record is the one in Utah in 1884, when some of her own children were baptized. However, re-baptism was common at that time, especially after emigration, and the 1884 baptism is probably of that nature.



Benbow Farm and its pond, at Castle Frome, Herefordshire, is some twenty miles from Leominster, where the James Hughes family lived, and fifteen from his parents-in-law in Bodenham—close enough he could have been there in 1840-41 while Wilford Woodruff was, which was not long before James’ baptism June 8, 1841. Perhaps he heard the gospel then. If not, he heard it from those Wilford Woodruff taught, the first circle of a gospel-ripple effect through Herefordshire.

Eliza’s failing health gave a new urgency to emigration, and Eliza and her older sister Jane were sent to Utah with a Mormon company, with some 534 persons on the steamship *Minnesota*, under the leadership of John Parry, an early leader of the Church in Wales and later the director of what would become the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.¹⁰

The sisters departed Liverpool with that company on June 30th, 1868, and reached New York harbor on July 12, 1868. “Previous to [the *Minnesota*’s] departure, a meeting was held on the poop deck, when the Saints were addressed by President F.

⁹www.lds.org/ensign/1987/01/harvest-in-herefordshire

¹⁰http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:account/id:883

[Franklin] D. Richards. . . . He exhorted them to faithfulness, unity, order, and brotherly love, and promised them, on condition of observing these things, a safe and swift passage across the sea. Elder C. [Charles] W. Penrose engaged in prayer, and dedicated the ship and the company to the care and protection of Almighty God. Several hymns were sung, and much good feeling was displayed. . . . The Minnesota steamed away to sea at 4 a.m., amid the cheers and rejoicings of the Saints on board. God speed her on her way."¹¹

On the voyage, Eliza was very ill. Family lore is that the crew wanted to throw her overboard, perhaps fearing she had a contagious disease. (However, Zebulon Jacobs, one of the three brethren presiding over the Mormon company, observed a need to protect women in the company from some members of the crew. The alleged threat may actually have been an attempt to intimidate two young women traveling without a male relative.) The ship's Captain, James Price, moved the girls to a cabin near his quarters where he could see they were protected.¹²



Sandy Hook Lighthouse, built before the American Civil War, was then the first landmark transatlantic travelers saw. Zebulon Jacobs, on Eliza's voyage, mentions it as his first sight of land.

John Parry has high praise for the captain and his officers. At the conclusion of the crossing, he wrote, "The captain, officers, and crew say that they never had such a favorable and delightful passage over the ocean before. No death occurred, although we numbered about 1,150 passengers, and crew 104. ... Captain James Price's conduct has been gentlemanly, kind, and upright towards us all the way through,

¹¹A Compilation of General Voyage Notes, <http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu>

¹² This was a long-standing practice among captains of passenger vessels. Some seventy years later, when Ernest Schulzke (Margot's husband), who crossed the Atlantic as a young boy with his mother and little brother just before World War II, came ill on board ship, the captain moved the family to a cabin near his—treating them with the utmost kindness. The children were even provided with toys and ice cream.

and has given the greatest satisfaction, which is praiseworthy; also Mr. Roberts, the chief steward, and Dr. Buchanan. Through their aid and assistance, and the blessing of the Lord, we have been able to maintain health and comfort among the Saints, and all feel first-rate.” He mentions that the members gave a concert in the saloon on the event of July 4th, at the request of other passengers—perhaps performed by currently emigrating members of his Welsh choir.¹³

However, Elder Parry mentions that two passengers were ill. Eliza must have been one of them. By the time they reached New York, she had improved considerably, but was far from well. Jane insisted on carrying Eliza, who was small in stature, down the gangplank. In attempting to do so, Jane lost her balance and they fell into the water. Fortunately, they were rescued immediately, and no harm was done.

New York is not the place to be in mid-July. On landing, it was very hot, and over the next few days, several members of the company died of sun stroke.¹⁴ The group traveled on by train to meet the wagons in Wyoming, but usually not on comfortable passenger coaches. Nor without other difficulties.

Fellow emigrant Alexander Street wrote, “They put some of us in box cars, and some in cattle cars. At the time we felt quite indignant, but those in the cattle cars were much blessed for what breeze there was that got in, which was very desirable. I remember at one place in the States that the people tried to influence my father to not go to Utah. They told him that if he did, that Brigham Young would take mother away from him. And if he did not want to stay in Utah, he could not get away. ... How much different we found it, everybody had the privilege . . . to go and come with as much freedom as any other place on earth. Brigham Young, instead of being a bad man, was a good man. Never did he teach anything but good.”¹⁵

Changing several times from one train to another, and at least twice riding in cattle cars or box cars, the group worked their way west, passing through Lower Canada (Ontario) and near Niagara. The weariness they experienced must have been overwhelming. They then traveled into Chicago and down through Illinois, where the company were subjected to some abuse.

Zebulon Jacobs wrote, “[July] 19th, Sun. Yesterday and today we are passing through Illinois, the state where our beloved prophet & his brother were murdered. Our coming had been heralded in advance. [We saw] considerable excitement in

¹³ <http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu>; Op cit. John Parry had emigrated to Utah with many members of his Welsh choir a number of years earlier.

¹⁴ The Journals and Reminiscences of Alexander Street, (Ms 2008), fd. 2, vol. 2, pp. 9-10, 20. <http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu>

¹⁵ Ibid

consequence as we passed through. We are the first company of Mormons ever passing through the country on cars.¹⁶ [There is] considerable anxiety to see some live Mormons. Some were very rough & insulting, while others were more civil.

“At one station, Isaac Kimball had to boot one fellow. He could not get past the guard stationed at the doors of the cars, and was getting into one of the windows as Isaac grabbed him and snaked him not very gently to the platform, giving him a sling, he went headlong about 12 feet. Another fellow interfering, I told him he had better pass on; he looked at me--and thought so too. Five others then stepped up. We met them halfway and wanted to know how much they wanted. They made some threats and turned off.

“Both yesterday and today, all along the route, they have looked at us as if we were wild beasts. I asked several smart folks how they enjoyed the show. Others would try to force themselves into the cars to insult the people. Came near having several [unclear, perhaps fist fights] because I would not be run over.”¹⁷ While we don’t know whether Jane and Eliza saw the events directly, they surely heard about them almost at once. We can imagine them looking on or listening with some anxiety—and with perhaps with some amusement at the outcome.

With her family, Mary Simmons had crossed the Atlantic in 1867, a year earlier. But they were advised not to attempt to come to Utah that year “because it was unsafe to journey west at this time, as the Indians were on the warpath through the Black Hills.” In 1868 Mary writes, “We started across the plains in Captain Seeley's company, journeying as far as Laramie, Wyoming by train, this being the end of the railroad, most of the way in cattle cars, with just boards put across for seats, no back to lean against. I remember, as a child of six, how dreadfully the cars smelled.” These are the same conditions and same time frame in which Eliza and Jane traveled; the experience of riding in cattle cars or box cars is widely reported in pioneer journals. The cars surely smelled as bad to them as they did to Mary.

The company with which they came arrived at Ft. Laramie July 22, 1868. There were thirteen companies which departed from there in 1868, the earliest leaving the day after the two girls arrived. Various companies arrived in Salt Lake City between August 20th and October 24th. Zebulon Jacobs reports that the “Minnesota” passengers took their belongings directly from the train to waiting wagons,¹⁸ so it is likely Eliza and Jane left for Salt Lake within two or three days of reaching Laramie.

¹⁶ That was incorrect. Elizabeth Julia Brown had come through that region with her Mormon company in 1864, so there had been others.

¹⁷ Reminiscences and Diary of Zebulon Jacobs, Mormon Migration.
<http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu>

¹⁸ Zebulon Jacobs, op. cit.

We find them listed in a company for which the name of its captain has been lost, known now ironically enough as *Company Unknown*. However, the names and ages of the members of the company survive. Eliza Hughes is listed as aged 14, Jane Hughes as 19.¹⁹ By Zebulon Jacobs' count, there were 548 pioneers in this group, so it may include the entire group they arrived in New York with, minus those who had died or defected along the way. We know that the girls were assigned to the wagon of Reuben Miller, who had known the Prophet Joseph and who has a place in early church history.

Twelve people, more or less, were assigned to each wagon in a train, meaning their trunks and belongings rode, but the healthy walked. Eliza, still not strong, rode in the wagon of Brother Miller. Both Eliza and Jane appreciated his many kindnesses to them.²⁰ At trail's end, Reuben Miller proposed marriage to Jane, and she became his fifth wife.

We can assume that, on their arrival, the girls proceeded to the home of their older sister Lucy Hughes Taylor and her husband George, then living in Millcreek.²¹

"Eliza's father, James Hughes, and her sisters Harriet and Charlotte arrived in America one year later, 1869." He sold his cobbler's shop to pay the cost of their emigration. They departed Liverpool on the *Minnesota*, the same ship on which Eliza had crossed the Atlantic in 1868, departing Liverpool and arriving in New York in October. The train lines had reached Ogden. Eliza was living in Millcreek in Salt Lake City, apparently with her sister Lucy. Lucy and her husband George Taylor drove a wagon to Ogden to meet his train.

Eliza, then fifteen, remained behind to tend the cows and chickens. "Eliza became awfully sick and couldn't get up. She heard Barney (Bernard Evans) whistling. She crawled to the door and called, 'Oh, Barney!' She fainted when he came. He picked her up and put her in her bed, and went after Aunt Jane (Eliza's sister, Jane Hughes Miller.)"

When met in Ogden, her father heard about her being sick. Fearing that if she were very ill he may not get there in time to see her alive, he left the wagon and "walked clear from Ogden to Salt Lake City, getting there before the wagon came. She had

¹⁹ From Mormon pioneer company lists for 1868.

²⁰ Winnifred Williams Carrell, granddaughter

²¹ The two-story ranch house they built there still remains, as well as many of that family's artifacts. The little cemetery in that area contains the graves of a number of Hughes relations, among them James Hughes, who would arrive in Utah the following year and lived until 1903. We had the pleasure just a couple of years ago—about 2011—to participate in providing a marker for Jame's grave.

typhoid fever and was very sick for over a year. She never was well to amount to nothing after that.”²²

Three older sisters did not emigrate: Catherine, born in 1836, who had married William Nichols; Elizabeth, born in 1838, married to William Kennedy, and Mary Ann Hughes, born in 1846, who was married to William Grubb, and who had dropped dead with her baby daughter in her arms.²³ Elizabeth (Bessie) “had sons and sons-in-law and grandsons killed in [World War I]. Some of her family emigrated to Canada.”²⁴

“During the next four years, Eliza and Bernard (usually known as Liza and Barney) courted and fell in love, and married in 1873 when he was 23 and she was nineteen” in Salt Lake City, Utah. “Shortly after their marriage, they went to live in Kamas Valley, Summit County, Utah. It was there that their first child was born, a little girl named Phoebe Jane, named after Bernard’s mother, Phoebe Jones Evans—and possibly also in tribute to his stepmother, Jane Roberts. The little girl lived only five days.”²⁵

“Eliza and Bernard moved to Kamas to live with his father, Hugh Evans. Later, they moved back to Salt Lake City and lived there several years where five of their children were born. The others were born in Kamas. They later moved back to Kamas where [Bernard] was a farmer and did other work. They bought four lots that equaled about ten acres of land and another 20 acres of farming land, living in a two-room log house.”²⁶

It was around this time that Eliza and another young woman, Agnes Pack, were asked to sing and perform for a church event. “First one would sing and then the other. Later Eliza sang again, and she wore a costume that she had worn when she was in school. It was white with butterflies all over it, and she wore a butterfly in her hair. She sang, ‘Shoo, Fly, Don’t Bother Me,’ and step-danced.”

The next morning, while hanging out her laundry, she heard two women talking in the cabbage patch nearby. “They said that ‘Barney Evans has married a dancer, an entertainer; she is no good, just a darned old actress.’ From that point on, she would not take part in much of anything. Daughter Phebeth Evans Seymour said, ‘This

²² Phebeth Evans Seymour, her daughter, as told to Joan Seymour Hamblin.

²³ Phebeth Evans Seymour, in conversation with Margot S Schulzke.

²⁴ Winnifred Williams Carrell

²⁵ Maxwell-Seymour History, p 348.

²⁶ Winnifred Williams Carrell.

decision hurt the whole family, because from then on, the children never did anything either.”²⁷ Several lessons are written here.

However, it appears the family continued to attend Sacrament Meeting and Sunday School, as reported in the Maxwell-Seymour history.

Winnifred Williams Carrell recalls, “Grandma loved people and children. She loved to grow flowers and a garden. She was a good seamstress and excellent cook. I can [still] taste her soda cakes covered with whipped cream and coconut, her plum pudding with spirits poured over the top and set on fire. Also her railroad bread, what we called raisin bread, but she used currants instead. That’s what they ate with their tea; coming from England, they were tea drinkers, of course. Her family joined the church, those who were old enough at the time. Their home was a home for the Mormon missionaries while the Hughes were still in ... England.”

“It seemed like she always had plenty to eat and always set a good table. We children always had a cup of tea when we went there. One time when I was staying with her a herd of sheep came along by her house. We went out to watch them and she recognized the herder, a man she knew. She asked him for me, a little lamb, and he gave me one. I was so proud of it. He was my pet for a long time. It would play hide-and-seek with me and my brother.

“We spent most of our Christmas dinners at Grandma’s house. After my mother left home, Grandfather built a nice home. It had seven rooms, two large porches, one the north and one on the south. I always admired the house, the windows and porches were all trimmed with cut-out wood of fancy design.

“Grandmother had coal black hair and beautiful soft brown eyes. She always had me comb it whenever I was there. She was a very kind person and my brothers and I spent many happy hours at her home. She did some handwork when she had time from her daily work. It was cross-stitching mostly done at the bottom of her tie aprons.”²⁸ Eliza’s grandchildren spoke of her “as being a real stand-by, always at home to look after the needs and wants of the family.”²⁹ Thelma Seymour Maxwell speaks of how lovely the home was, “with beautiful gas lamps hanging various places throughout the house. . . . The house had ‘the most beautiful velvet table cover on the dining room table. It was various shades of green, embossed with exotic birds, peacocks, etc. It had a long silky fringe on the edge. The table sat next

²⁷ Maxwell-Seymour History, p. 348; quote from Phebeth Evans Seymour in an interview by James and LuJean Maxwell

²⁸ Winnifred Williams Carrell, granddaughter.

²⁹ Thelma Seymour Maxwell, Maxwell-Seymour History, p. 349

to the south window full of plants. To the left as you faced the window, they had a clock hanging on the wall that chimed the hour. . . . Grandma was very little, and always looked her best and was a perfectionist in all she did.”³⁰



Evans Home in Kamas, Utah

According to Grandma Phebeth Evans Seymour, Bernard loved horses. He had a team of big white work horses that he would show in parades in the area. ³¹ “A man named John Ashby years later told ... Phebeth that if it had not been for Barney and Eliza, he would not be there that day, for at one time they kept him and his whole family from starving while he was unable to get work. He said that every day the Evans would bring milk, bread, vegetables or anything they had to help them out.”³²

Eliza Hughes Evans died in Kamas, Summit County, Utah, on March 16, 1912, at the age of fifty-nine. She was buried in the Kamas Cemetery. Bernard died 7 January 1922, and is buried beside her. ##

³⁰ Thelma Maxwell, “G & G Evans.”

³¹ Phebeth Ann Evans Seymour, daughter, in conversation with Margot Seymour Schulzke, great-granddaughter

³² There was no Church welfare system until the 1930s, and people provided charity to individuals as they might accidentally become aware of a need.