

## Life history

Contributed By [RobertEaton](#) · 2013-05-13 00:51:37 GMT+0000 (UTC) · 0 Comments

A HISTORY OF ELIZABETH ANN MORRIS BUTLER RICE Typed by Rebecca Eaton A handcart pioneer – 1856 Elizabeth Ann Morris was born in Pontest, Carmarthen, South Wales on June 13, 1817, the daughter of Richard and Eliza Jones Morris. In 1841 she married William Butler, a coal digger, who was the son of John and Mary Thomas Butler. William was born June 12, 1816, also at Carmarthen. Ann was the mother of four children: Elizabeth, born June 21, 1842; William Richard, born May 1848; John Thomas and Jane, dates unknown. When Ann was thirteen years of age her mother died, leaving six children whom she and her sister Margaret cared for. Their father married again shortly after the death of his wife Eliza, and the woman he married had three children. Through her influence, Richard deserted his own family and they were left to care for themselves. When Ann was fifteen years of age she was given a good home by a family who loved her as their own, and where she was taught household duties, and how to make a living at sewing, which profession she followed. Ann and William Butler were among the first people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Wales. The missionaries who first introduced the gospel to them were Elders John Corril and Elias Higbee. Daniel Jones and the other elders came to Wales about 1843. After prayerful study, the Butlers accepted the teachings and soon commenced preparations to cast their lot with the Saints. At last their dream was about to be realized; reservations were made and fare paid for the family to sail to the “promised land”. But tragedy struck before sailing time, and the husband and father was stricken with cholera and died July 13, 1855. Some time later, John Thomas developed cholera and died, as did Jane, two days before the ship was to sail. Ann was now faced with the struggle of supporting her two remaining children. For two years they had worked and saved to go to America. Personal belongings had been packed and sent to the port in readiness. If Ann stopped to bury her son and daughter she would give up her chance to leave. Her hard earned savings had been spent for reservations, which could not be refunded. Her sister, Margaret Morris, who also planned to go to America, offered to stay and attend to the burial of the children, and then follow them to Zion as soon as possible. This was a heart-breaking decision to make, but Ann decided to go on with Elizabeth and William Richard. They sailed April 19, 1856, on the Samuel Curling under the direction of Elder Dan Jones and landed on May 25, 1856, at Boston, where the ship was inspected by the health authorities and commended for its cleanliness. They rode on a cattle car from Boston to Des Moines, Iowa, a distance of 1,300 miles. After three weeks of waiting for their handcart to be made ready, they started the trek across the plains, leaving Iowa June 23, 1856, in Captain Edward Bunker’s handcart company just three months since leaving Wales. During the ocean voyage, William Richard had

observed his eighth birthday. Elizabeth was fourteen years of age. They traveled to Winter Quarters, where each received 100 pounds of flour and other provisions. They had progressed some distance when cholera broke out in camp and the daughter, Elizabeth, became very ill. Ann asked the captain if she could stop and doctor her sick child, as she was too ill to walk or if she might ride in one of the supply wagons. The captain said, "No, we must go on, your daughter is old enough to walk." Ann and William put Elizabeth on the cart and prayed that something would happen to delay the train. The first wagon had scarcely pulled out when one of its axles broke and a halt was called. It was about nine hours before the wagon was repaired and ready to go, and, as it was nearly night, the train did not move until morning. When they were ready to start, Elizabeth was better and was able to walk. Their supplies were about gone except for the flour, and this they lived on for days. Many times they stopped for herds of buffalo to pass, and some were killed for food. A supply wagon came to meet them, or they would have perished, but God was with them. When they arrived in the Valley, October 2, 1856, their clothes were in tatters, the women's dresses were worn out completely across the front and back where the handcart handle had rubbed, and rags were wrapped around their cracked, sore feet. The only distance they rode was on a supply wagon while crossing the rivers. The children were given a ride on a wagonload of wood from Echo Canyon into the valley by one of the settlers. When the company reached their destination, they found the children had been washed and fed by some of the kind Saints. When Heber C. Kimball saw them as they came into the Valley, singing and so happy, he said, "If anyone deserves a reward in heaven, it is these poor Saints who have pulled their bodies without any shoes on their feet all this long way." President Brigham Young said, "I hope they will keep on pulling." One of Ann's friends from Wales took Ann and the two children into her home for a few days, then Heber C. Kimball asked Ira Rice, a widower of means originally from Michigan, if he would employ Ann as his housekeeper. The mother of his large family had died in Iowa. Ira hired Ann to keep house for his motherless children. On the 20th of November 1856, Ann and Ira were married. They were happy in their pioneer home with their two families, but were never blessed with children of their own. Ira loved to read, and taught the children to read. He was amply rewarded in alter years, for his eyesight failed and he could listen while William Richard read to him. Ann was an excellent housekeeper and worked hard to care for her large family. After spending a few years in Ogden, Ira decided to go to Cache Valley with a group of men who had explored that country two years before. He found it a beautiful place and moved his family there in the spring of 1859, along with Hopkins Mathews and others. Log cabins were hastily erected and clearing of land commenced. By fall of that year Providence, as it was called, boasted of more than twenty log houses built in fort style. The winter was very cold, but spring found them ready to plant their crops with their crude, hand-made plows and other tools. Ira then

built a second house, which was a comparatively comfortable home, but again he had the urge to explore. In 1865, the Rice family answered the call to help settle southern Utah. Daughter Elizabeth had married Charles Henry Gates and was the mother of three small children when her husband was killed by a bear in Providence Canyon. Elizabeth later married David William Campbell of Ogden. This family and others went to southern Utah with Ira and settled near St. George in Washington County, where they again pioneered. Many hardships were endured in this place. Ann and her children helped in these new communities by carding wool, spinning it into yarn with which to knit stockings, sweaters, and shawls. Knitting needles were hard to get so with the quills of turkey and chicken feathers as needles, she taught her children this art. Ira Rice died on the fourteenth of April 1868, leaving Ann with a large family to care for. She had been set apart as a midwife and doctor by Heber C. Kimball before she left Ogden and was known far and wide as Grandma Rice. She helped in Orderville until the Order was finished and made trips all over the country to help the sick. Ann was blessed with discernment and vision, being warned many times in dreams of impending disaster. In one of these dreams she saw her husband Ira, carrying a load in a blanket, occasionally stopping to rest, and where he set the load, a pool of blood was seen. Some days later Ira and neighbor, Charles Willis, were digging a ditch when Willis was crushed by some rock and Ira carried him to the house in a blanket, leaving a pool of blood where he had rested. Ann brought hundreds of babies into the world without medical assistance – Ethel Baker was the last baby she delivered. William Richard, her son, carried mail from St. George to Beaver Dam, but after he had married Elizabeth Snow Alexander in Escalante, Utah, he moved there. Ann later moved to Escalante where she lived in a small home near them. Taking an active part in church work, she walked to the meetinghouse each Sunday until nearing her eightieth birthday when she became too feeble. In her declining years a log cabin was built on the lot of her granddaughter, Sarah Ann Shirts. Here Ann helped make butter and cheese to ship to Salt Lake City in exchange for various materials, which she did so enjoy, for previous to this time she had raised, spun and woven her own cloth. For forty years she served as a nurse in this vicinity. Ann died at the age of eighty-one years in Escalante, Utah, on 30 November 1897. D.U.P. Files. The above history was taken from the book, OUR PIONEER HERITAGE, by Kate B. Carter – Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. Note – Whenever the dates in the text did not match those we found in our research, we substituted these dates in this history. Note – The history of Ira Rice was taken from the statement by William Kelsey Rice to Ethel Lynn Rice White, daughter of Leonard Gurley Rice in 1907, and from notes taken by Eva Clark Wilcox from incidents related by Aunt Libbie Bybee at eighty years of age. Originals are in the possession of Dora Rice Duncan. The Ira Rice History and the William Kelsey Rice history was rearranged and edited by Oriel A. Tracy in November and December of 1967. Oriel A. Tracy at the time was vice-

president of the Rice Family Organization and descended through Hyrum Smith Rice, the eleventh child of Ira Rice and Sarah Ann Harrington.