

John McCleve

John McCleve, son of John and Catherine Lamb McCleve, was born in Bellamony County Down, Ireland, August 18, 1807, and was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in June, 1845. He married Nancy Jane McFerrin, the only child of James and Nancy McHarry McFerrin. She was born May 1, 1815, at Crawfordsborn on Shellyhill County Down, Ireland, and was baptized in June, 1841, by David Wilkins. Her affiliation with the then despised Mormon faith was much against her husband's wishes, but he finally became converted and was baptized four years later. He was a shoemaker and she was a dress maker.

John and Nancy Jane McCleve had a family of ten children. Mary Jane was the fourth, born in Belfast, Ireland, August 21, 1840. She was baptized when eight years old in the Irish sea by Robert Wallace and confirmed by John D. T. McAllister. The family sailed for America in April, 1856, arriving in Boston from where they went to Iowa City. The two oldest girls, Sarah and Catherine, had preceded them to Salt Lake Valley. They crossed the plains in the Second Handcart Company, Daniel McArthur, captain. They hauled their provisions in handcarts, a cart on two wheels with a shaft to draw it. There were seven children in the family at this time, Margaret, Mary Jane, Isabella, Eliza, Joseph, Alexander and John.

There was a German family consisting of father, mother and eight children by the name of Elliker, who traveled and camped with them. They could not speak English. Mr. Elliker and four of the children died on the plains.

One day they started up a large hill and a young Elliker boy became sick and could not climb the hill, so they went on and left him. When they camped at night they thought he would come, but he did not, so next morning the captain went back, but could not find him. He was never seen again.

At another time the company stopped to do their washing. They went some distance from the camp to the river. Mary Jane was building the fire to heat the water while Margaret returned to the camp for something. At that moment two men rode up in a buggy. One of them jumped out and asked Mary Jane if she would like to ride with them. She said, "No, thank you." Then he asked her if she had any folks. She replied that she had. The man in the buggy said to the other, "Take this handkerchief and tie her mouth up and throw her in." Just at that moment her father and sister appeared over a small hill which hid the camp. The men then put the whip to their horses and drove away. The father died two days before they reached the valley and was buried near the Weber River. The others arrived in the valley on September 26, 1856.—Mary E. Hoyt and Hattie Esplin.

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