

*A life sketch of*

# Samantha Audrey Willey Call

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1872 – 1950

Samantha Audrey Willey was the second daughter of Jeremiah Willey and Annie Roberts. This family consisted of eight daughters and one son and was among the noble spirits of our Heavenly Father – possessors of pioneer blood and of the fullness of the Priesthood and of the greatest blessings that can be bestowed on mortal man through our temples.

Samantha was born February 12, 1872, at Bountiful, Utah. It was here that she spent all of her young years. She entered school at six years of age and attained an elementary education.

Samantha was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on September 18, 1880. She had all the advantages of church training that the auxiliaries in a country LDS church had to offer. She lived the life of a normal child. She was very familiar with privation and had only the bare necessities of life. Her home was very humble, always clean, neat and orderly. ‘Mattie’, as she was known, knew little or nothing of the luxuries of life and yet she had all the advantages of a good home life.

At the age of fifteen, she was stricken with a severe attack of typhoid fever. For weeks her recovery was very uncertain. It was through this great trial that Mattie proved her unusual amount of faith. “Thy faith shall make thee whole,” was pronounced in her behalf and so it was manifest.

Her knowledge of life and its problems were enhanced when she went into the homes of other people as an attendant, sang in the choir and assisted with the leadership of her church in ward capacities. She soon outgrew her ailments and grew to maturity, a healthy, beautiful young lady. Mattie was small of stature, trim of figure, neat in appearance. She had a winning smile that she was quick to share with all she came in contact with.



During her teen years, Mattie met a charming young man. This friendship grew rapidly and seriously. On September 24, 1890, Aaron Call and Samantha Willey entered the Logan Temple and were sealed for all eternity.

They spent the first few months of their married life in Salt Lake City, where Aaron worked for the railroad. They then moved to Bountiful, Utah. With their saved money, they purchased a ten acre garden farm. Aaron would haul their produce to Salt Lake each day and sell it at the street market.

In July of the next year, Mattie became the proud mother of a son, Aaron Willey. Three years later, a second son, who they named Jeremiah Russell, came to brighten their home.

Samantha felt it necessary to request that her bishop call her husband to serve a mission. With full confidence in her ability to take the responsibility of their two sons she bid farewell to her husband and sent him to the Southern States for an expected two years. Both faced this time with faith and determination to serve valiantly in the responsibilities of spreading the gospel. After seventeen months, Aaron was disheartened, sick and discouraged when he returned to his family. Mattie gave the labor of her hands for his support; she poured into him ambition when he grew discouraged; she supplemented his weakness with her strength; she filled him with her hope and faith when his own failed. Aaron regained his ability to care for his family. Much of the credit is accredited to this quiet, little woman who was content to be in the background.

The Call home was blessed with three little daughters, Lula May, Cecil Ray and Lorena. Mattie's life was busy with the rearing of these little souls. She was content and happy in her service to her family.

On January 27, 1905, Aaron and Mattie consented to the proposition of another mission for the church. This time Aaron prepared to leave for England. The only answer to the financial responsibility of caring for his family while gone and meeting his own needs was to place a mortgage on their small farm and home. They rented the land and left the rest to their Father in Heaven. Mattie sent Aaron off to England.

Mattie was left to maintain a home, provide clothing and food, as well as supply the support of both a mother and father to her five small children. She took seriously the charge to send \$30.00 a month to her husband, although many months she did not know where it would

come from. In the annals of history, no woman ever exhibited greater faith, nor has any woman ever felt more keenly the need of implanting into the lives of her children God-like principles. She riveted in their young minds a testimony that God lives. Through whispered prayers, bedtime stories, high ideals and always a vision of their hero father, this mother taught her children to worship. The new clothes and the nice little things that Mattie so loved were all forgotten that she might send to her husband the money so necessary to carry on his missionary work. At the end of twenty-seven months and a very successful mission, Aaron returned to his anxiously awaiting family.

In the spring that followed, the Calls moved to Syracuse, a small village about twenty miles north of Bountiful. For ten years their lives were uninterrupted by separation for scarcely a single day. Farm life was good to Mattie and her family. Hard work and the needs of a growing family kept her focused on the simple life style and the basic needs it required.

While in Syracuse, Mattie met many challenges. Fire destroyed a large haystack and derrick one summer. The following summer, fire destroyed their five-room home and everything that was in it. With nothing more than determination, they rebuilt and started life anew.

Seven more children came to the family during this time. They were Thelma, Genevie, Clark and Cleo (twins), Darrell and Doris (twins), and Ben Roberts. The Call home was very full and very blessed.

In 1915, Mattie's little Doris died at the tender age of two. This loss was extremely difficult for the family to accept. Once again, Mattie exercised all the faith she had and put her total trust in her Heavenly Father.

Each Sunday, this family of twelve would travel by horse and buggy to the church house. It was a trip of three miles, but what a trip it often was as they would crowd and jockey for space and comfort. A common sight was to see this family, ten or twelve in number lined up on a church house bench at ten o'clock for Sunday school. Following that meeting they would gather on the lawn to enjoy a lunch, which they had brought with them. At two o'clock, they would fill the church bench again for Sacrament Meeting, always clean, neat and the best of order expected and maintained.

Mattie was very active in church work. Filling important positions in primary and acting on the stake board of Relief Society were some of the callings she held while in Syracuse.

With the growth of their family, Mattie and Aaron decided upon another move. The family moved to Burley, Idaho, March 12, 1917. They purchased eighty acres and busily set to work farming it. Church activity came to both of them and for twenty-two years, they worked their land and raised their family there. Many wonderful opportunities came to them, but tragedy did too. In 1919, Cecil Ray passed away. At some point, Mattie was involved in a bad car accident. This accident left her back, neck and head injured quite badly. She was never able to completely recover from the damage. As time passed, complications from this accident reduced her to a semi-invalid state for the rest of her life. In 1939, Mattie faced another loss when her daughter Cleo died. Through all that was unhappy, Mattie clung to all that was good and faced her challenges with a prayer in her heart and an unwavering faith in her God.

After living in Burley for twenty years, Samantha and Aaron left a trail of good deeds and a host of close friends and moved to Ogden, Utah. The work of the farm was no longer something they could handle, and they longed for a life of retirement.

Although she was limited in her activity and church work after the accident, Mattie did attend church and was able to assist in maintaining their beautiful little home. She never gave up and tried to keep her positive attitude and do what she could. Her motherly instincts reached beyond her own family. A very familiar sight was to see the neighborhood children gathered at the home of Sister Call. Sometimes one child would keep her company, sometimes many.

One outstanding characteristic Mattie possessed was the constant vigilance she kept with her Heavenly Father. Depending implicitly on him on all occasions, she under every circumstance would seek his guidance and help for the performance of every activity of every day. She prayed often, and was at the height of joy when the Elders were in their home for the purpose of exercising the priesthood. Mattie was administered too often because of her ailments. Her religion was “whatever people may think of you, do that which you believe to be right”. She also had the gift of expressing her thoughts in writing. She wrote many beautiful poems, and some musical readings.

Mattie loved life and clung rigorously to it. Her devotion to her home, family and husband were noted by all that knew her. On March 15, 1950, after a brief stay in the hospital, Samantha Audrey Willey Call bade farewell to this mortal existence.

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*This Life Sketch of Samantha Audrey Willey Call was adapted from the writing of J. Russell Call of Meza, Arizona, son of Samantha Audrey Willey Call.*

*Names, places, and dates have been verified with family genealogy information and records in possession of K. Oswald, and family history records in possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.*