

Thomas Stolworthy and Matilda Jenkersen Stolworthy

Thomas Stolworthy was born December 8, 1828 in Great Yarmouth, England to Henry and May Howes Stolworthy, the youngest of 10 children. Henry was a mill builder. Matilda Jinkensen or Jenkerson was born August 13, 1827 in Alton, England to Thomas and Christianna Louvick Jinkensen. She too was the youngest of 10 children. They both joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but were the only ones in each of their families to join so they called themselves the tithing children.

Thomas and Matilda married May 13, 1852, according to the marriage certificate. The next year they joined the Church and their first child was born. They had three children while living in Great Yarmouth. Thomas was born January 23, 1853 and died one day later, George Stanley was born November 30, that same year and died the next day, and finally William Dodd was born and died the following year.

Following William's death Thomas and Matilda left for Utah. They took the ship Clara Wheeler from Liverpool to New Orleans. According to the ship records as found at mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu they left Liverpool November 27, 1854 with 422 people on board. They had very rough seas and had to return to port. While waiting to start again Elder Franklin D. Richards came to the ship and told the people if they would fast and pray they would have favorable winds. They did so and were able to leave on the 7th of December. The captain said the trip to New Orleans was one of the quickest he ever made arriving on the 11th of January. Though the ride went well the people suffered greatly, most from seasickness during the early days of the voyage, some from lack of food supplies and some from sickness. Three adults and 20 children died during the passing, most of them from measles.

Thomas Crowther, another passenger, wrote:

“On the twelfth of January, James McGaw, the church emigration agent at New Orleans, contracted with the captain of the steamboat Oceana, to take the passengers to St. Louis at the rate of three dollars and a half for each adult, and half of that for children between three and twelve years old; and twenty-four hours after their arrival in New Orleans, the emigrants were on their way up the river. Nearly one half of the company had not the means wherewith to pay their passage to St. Louis; but the more well-to-do Saints who had more money than they needed themselves, were influenced to lend to those who had none, and thus all who desired to continue the journey were enabled to do so. At St. Louis where the company arrived in safety, the emigrants were met by Apostle Erastus Snow and others, who gave the new arrivals a hearty welcome, and conducted them to comfortable quarters, which had been secured for their accommodation.”

Thomas, having been an iron molder by trade, worked in a foundry to secure means to travel to Utah. During the time they spent in St. Louis another child was born to Thomas and Matilda. They named her Matilda. She was born March 26, 1855 and died less than one month later on the 11th of April.

The Stolworthys went in a freight train led by Isaac Allred which left near the end of July 1855 from Mormon Grove, now Atchison, Kansas and arrived in Salt Lake around the first of November 1855. They were to carry large equipment for Brigham Young in addition to goods for other businessmen. There were 61 individuals and 34-38 wagons in the company when it began its journey. From the journal of Isaiah Moses Coombs, a fellow traveler, we learn that the weather was very rainy the first couple of weeks. The grass was poor much of the way and they lost many cattle, thus they had to abandon a number of wagons, leave some freight behind, and were on very small rations of flour by the end of the journey. Word was sent to Salt Lake and wagons and oxen were sent to them in order for the whole company to arrive safely.

Coming from England, Thomas and Matilda met a couple that were married on the ship, William and Keziah Warner. After arriving in Utah Thomas and William were both asked by Brigham Young to go to Cache Valley to herd cattle both for him and for the Church. The two couples stayed all winter in a small cabin at what was called Elk Horn Ranch. Today the area is in College Ward. Eliza Cache was born the next year on the 19th of July 1856. According to three histories of Cache Valley she was the first white child born in Cache Valley. When she was born the Indians paraded through the house to see the white baby. The winter was so hard that the Stolworthys and Warners left the next year as soon as they were able to do so. The Warners moved to Ogden in June and the Stolworthys left after Eliza's birth in July.

The Stolworthys were called to go to Iron county. Thomas a molder of iron was asked to start a bucket factory and an iron foundry in Parowan. Here Eliza Cache died, having lived about one year. While in Parawon Matilda gave birth to another daughter, Elizabeth. When she was a few months old a miracle occurred. Henry Thomas, a son, wrote of how Matilda's sixth child lay dying when a stranger came to the home and gave the child a blessing and promised, "Sister Stolworthy, you have had great sorrow and bereavement; your little girl will live, and you will yet raise a family." He promptly left the home and disappeared.

Next they were called back to Salt Lake where Henry Thomas was born on November 15, 1860 and then on to Centerville where Rose Annah was born December 24, 1862, Lucity on January 8, 1865 and Mary Magdalena on February 11, 1867. From there they were called to the Muddy Mission in Nevada in 1868.

Thomas had sufficient means to buy two nice span of mules for the trip. About twenty-five families went together. When they were about 100 miles from their new residence some Indians scared off all their animals, but thankfully did not harm the people. They had to send to the Muddy for animals so they could finish the trip. It took about three days. While there the children attended school in a bowery. It was a very difficult mission with searing sun, few trees, much wind, mosquitoes and the diseases they carry, and ever-present Indian troubles. It was under these trying circumstances that Matilda gave birth to the last of her eleven children. In 1869 Annie was born and died one month later.

In 1872 the saints had to leave Nevada and were called to go to Mt. Carmel in Southern Utah. Saints had lived there previously but had been driven out by Indians. The Stolworthys stayed there just two or three years because the previous settlers heard that people were again going to settle Mt. Carmel and they wanted their land back. Thomas and Matilda and others from the Muddy moved a few miles North to Orderville and joined the United Order. Thomas acted as butcher and worked in the commissary. Matilda was a nurse and midwife. Their son Henry Thomas wrote of his father: "He moved to the [woolen] factory and lived there for some time. When the Order broke up father and mother moved to Huntington, Emery County, and stayed there quite a number of years, and then moved to Tropic, Utah." Their daughter Elizabeth lived in Tropic at the time. They then visited a daughter in Richfield, but spent their last remaining years with Rose in Orderville. "Father died September 3, 1916, with pneumonia. He was eighty-seven years old. Mother died on Thanksgiving day, November 18, 1918, of old age. She was ninety-one years old. Both were buried in Orderville, Kane County, Utah."

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