Women from Zion in the Samoan Mission: 1888-1900
Ruth R. Yeaman, Salt Lake City

In Salt Lake City, Utah, Joseph H. Dean, was arrested in May 1886 and later convicted for unlawful cohabitation. He was discharged from prison in March 1887. The same day he was released he learned he was to be arrested again. To escape arrest he hid in the home of a friend, William O. Lee.¹

On May 23, 1887, Joseph H. Dean and his second wife, Florence Ridges, daughter of Joseph H. Ridges, the builder of the famous Tabernacle Organ, were set apart to be missionaries. In his journal Elder Dean noted they were "set apart to go to the Sandwich, Society, Navigator [Samoa], or any of the other groups of islands that the spirit might dictate through the authorities." Joseph had previously served a Hawaiian mission and knew the language. A few days later Joseph and Florence had said their goodbyes to Sally, Joseph's first wife with five children, and they left for Hawaii.²

The Deans were in Hawaii until June 1888, when they left for Samoa.

On June 18, the captain of the ship Almeda stopped about 2 miles west of the island Tutuila, Samoa, and the Deans were lowered to a rowboat which had been sent to meet them. Because the sea was so rough they stayed on Tutuila for three nights. Finally on June 21, 1888 they were rowed to Aunuu and put ashore. They were greeted by Samuela Manoa and his wife, Faasopo. Manoa was a Hawaiian convert to the church who had been sent to Samoa in 1863 with a companion, Kimo Belio who died in 1876.³ They had been sent to Samoa by Walter Murray Gibson who had far exceeded his authority in Hawaii and was excommunicated in April 1864. Salt Lake Church authorities were apparently not aware of Manoa being in Samoa.⁴

Joseph Dean had found in the mission files evidence of the two Samoan missionaries and corresponded with Manoa who offered to share his western style home with the Deans if they came to Samoa to establish a Mission.⁵

Most Samoan homes used gravel for floors with woven mats, which were used for sitting and sleeping, placed over the gravel. The Deans found that Manoa and his wife had even prepared a western-style bed to be used by the Deans.

"In addition to the bed there was a good kerosene lamp, earthenware dishes, and a concrete floor. But they had no store, no cows, no bread, or anything to make it of. No running water, rainwater being all they used."⁶

"In June 1889, more American elders arrived, only to discover the missionaries and Samoan people were suffering from a famine resulting from a devastating
hurricane that hit the island in March of that year.
Britsch wrote: "June 1889 marked the end of the first year of the Samoan Mission. By this time the missionaries had experienced almost every problem Samoa could offer. They had endured [civil] war, famine, a hurricane, and tropical storms. "They had suffered sickness, apostasy, days in open boats, and storms at sea. Rumors had been circulated against them, and Protestant ministers had used both newspapers and their pulpits to republish the old lies about Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints. The elders' housing was inferior to their homes in Zion, and living conditions resembled a perpetual camping trip. "Nevertheless, the elders were in excellent spirits and eager to spread the gospel throughout the islands." 7

Joseph H. Dean wrote to the Millennial Star, in which the following brief note was published September 2, 1889: "We now number eight Elders and two sisters from Utah. So far we have not done much proselyting, our time being spent mostly in building homes for the future, and studying the language. Within a month we will be scattered all over the group of islands and expect to go from village to village. The Lord has greatly blessed us; we have not suffered, although living in a land of war and famine."

The Deans' first child, Jasper, was born February 9, 1888, during their short stay in Hawaii. Their second child was born June 1890 in Samoa. The Deans were released and left for home August 16, 1890. 9

Louise Calder Lee and her husband William O. Lee arrived in Samoa with their baby daughter Louise on October 10, 1888. On July 24, 1890, a son Henry Calder Lee was born.

When he accepted the call to open the Samoan Mission Joseph H. Dean had stated that he needed to have assistance and asked for William O. Lee and his wife, Louise Calder Lee to be called to come to Samoa. When President and Mrs. Dean completed their mission responsibilities, William O. Lee was called to become the Samoan Mission President. The Lees were released from their callings and left Samoa on February 4, 1892. 10

Katie Elizabeth Hale Merrill and her husband J. H. Merrill were called from Smithfield, Cache County, Utah to go on a mission to Samoa. They arrived March 12, 1891. Katie was pregnant with their first child when they entered the mission field. Several weeks before the expected birth of the baby she became

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very ill and their baby was born prematurely on June 28, 1891.

Sister Merrill’s husband Joseph thought the child was dead at first, but it soon showed signs of life. On June 29 the following occurred, as recorded in Elder Merrill’s journal.

"...at 1 o’clock I witnessed the death of our baby. And at 3 o’clock p.m. God saw fit to take my dear wife. It is all I can bear. We left home so happy ... and now I am left alone ... bereft of all my earthly joys ... unless I can overcome the sorrow and trials that are now heaped upon me I am crushed."

"An hour after the death of the child, the mother had called Sister Lee (wife of the mission president) to her bedside and, after thanking her for waiting on her during the sickness, said that she was ‘going to die’ that she ‘could not stay because they had come for her.’ She then talked with her husband, kissed him goodbye, and all was over." 12

Mother and child were buried in one coffin. The manager of the nearby German plantation gave permission for the burial on the brow of a hill near the Mission Home.

Despite his tragic loss Joseph Merrill, with devotion and perseverance went on to finish his mission. When he left for home, in April 1894, he took the remains of his wife and child back to Utah for reburial. 13

Katie Elizabeth Hale Merrill was the first sister missionary who died while filling a foreign mission. 14 In later years Joseph H. Merrill was called to serve as president of the Samoan Mission and arrived on December 19, 1901. He was released because of elephantiasis, in January 1903. 15

Annie Stevens and her husband Ransom M. Stevens were called to serve as missionaries in Samoa, and arrived April 17, 1892. Both he and his wife served diligently in their calling. After having learned the language and gained experience he was called to preside over the mission. 16 He had many virtues. His deeds of love and kindness made him a great favorite among the servants of the Lord in Samoa. Early in April 1894 he did not feel well and was confined to bed for ten days with a high fever. Every possible action, both spiritual and material, was taken to help him recover. These efforts were in vain for he died 28 April 1894. 17

His wife Annie left for home May 23 on the next steamer. The missionaries expressed their concern for her and their feelings toward her.

"We have learned to love Sister Stevens as a sister during her stay in this land; her noble deeds and womanly actions shall long be remembered by us." 18
The Deseret News published the following:

"Mrs. Annie D. Stevens, wife of the deceased, telegraphed from San Francisco yesterday to Elder George E. Browning, of Ogden, the former president of the Samoan Mission, as follows: 'My husband is dead. Leave here tomorrow morning. Please inform authorities and ask them to telegraph F. Christenson, Fairview, at once.' ... Brother Christenson is the father of the widow." 19

Mrs. Stevens arrived safely in Fairview, Utah. Numerous friends were there to greet her.

"The greetings were necessarily brief for Sister Stevens was feeling ill and had to retire to bed early. ... At 11 pm she gave birth to a nice boy." 20

A few days later the little boy died.

Sarah McMurrin Hilton and Thomas H. Hilton arrived in Samoa 17 April 1892. Their daughter Jeanette had been born before they left Salt Lake City. Jeanette died June 4, 1892. Their son Harold was born September 26, 1892 and died March 17, 1894. Another son George Emmet was born October 12, 1894 and died October 19, 1894.

Mission President Ransom Stevens wrote: "How sad to see our dear sister again bereft, and her so far from dear parents & friends she ... left for the gospels sake ... Much sympathy is felt for the bereaved parents and the blessings of the Lord are invoked upon them."

Elder Hilton was appointed by the Elders to take temporary charge when President Stevens died, until word arrived from the First Presidency. On July 12, 1894 he was appointed president of the Samoan Mission. He was released March 23, 1895.

On March 17, 1893, Maria Luella Redd Adams, a bride not quite seventeen, and Thomas D. Adams arrived in Samoa on the same steamer as Margaret Durham and Alfred M. Durham. Mission president George S. Browning informed the newcomers that since there were already lady missionaries in Samoa the two couples would be sent to Tonga, which was at that time, part of the Samoan Mission. It was necessary to wait three weeks for a steamship. Another week aboard the steamer and they arrived in Tonga. There they faced learning a new language; cooking over open fireplaces; eating completely different foods, using coconut shells for fuel; learning that the only source of water was rain that ran off the corrugated metal roof into a large metal tank, - in other words adjusting to a complete change of lifestyle.

From the book Memories, we read: "It would take volumes to write of all our experiences on our mission. ... Thomas and I learned a hymn and sang it in the native tongue. We loved doing it. ... We had grown very fond of these natives."

"Once the chief of the village invited us to attend a gathering where we sat on the grass in a big circle and listened
to him speak. As he was talking, he cleaned the dirt from beneath his toenails and fingernails with a large sharp knife. Finally he laid it aside, clapped his hands, and immediately a servant came to his side. He was ordered to bring a basket of oranges to serve as refreshments. Then the chief stabbed each orange with the point of his knife and presented on to each of us. As I watched this procedure, I whispered to my husband, 'Tom, I can't, I simply can't accept that orange from that knife.'

"'Louie,' he answered, 'you can and you must. We will not insult the chief by refusing his gift.'

"As ... two years drew to a close ... I was released with Sister Maggie Durham to return home. She lost a baby during that time and ... I found my health declining. We left our husbands in the islands to serve another year." 22

In later years Louie and Thomas often sang hymns in the Tongan language for their own pleasure and to entertain family and friends. Among the children that blessed their home was a daughter named Grace who became the wife of Obert C. Tanner.

Ella Adelia Williams married William Alfred Moody at her parents home on June 4, 1894. 23 They were a happy couple living in Thatcher, Arizona. William saw a prosperous future ahead. Then he received a letter from "Box B," calling him on a mission to Samoa. They felt concern since Adelia was to become a mother and in addition William was responsible for the care of his father's childless second wife "Auntie." After fervent prayer they both had the same feeling, "Oh, Lord, Thy will be done, not ours." 24

The plan decided upon was for William and Adelia to go together to Salt Lake to receive their endowments and be sealed as husband and wife. Then Adelia would return to live with her parents while William served his mission. William wrote Church Headquarters describing their plans. They traveled to Oasis to visit William's folks. There William received a letter stating that because Sarah Hilton was the only woman in the Samoan Mission Headquarters Adelia could accompany William on the mission so another woman could be there. This became a problem since they did not have adequate funds for two for fares and expenses.

In later years William wrote of this problem.

"A quick check told us we would be short some thirty dollars. "What are we to do?" she asked me. I did not know, and told her so, but added, "If this is truly the Lord's work, He will provide for us. We will go as far as our money takes us, and trust Him to open the way. Missionaries of our church once traveled without 'purse or scrip,' surely we are as capable as they. Have you sufficient faith to undertake it?" Without hesitation, she lifted her sweet face to me and said, "We will go. I trust you, and the
Lord will be with us." As I write of this, I marvel now at our childlike faith in undertaking a trip thousands of miles long without sufficient funds, with my wife on the way to bearing a child, and with no slightest knowledge of what conditions we should find in Samoa. Time and science have made the world small, but at that period of history, Samoa was as isolated from our home as another planet seems today. 25

From the time the letter was received in Oasis money came to them in several unexpected ways and they had adequate funds for their necessary expenses.

"We landed in Samoa with nine dollars." 26 It was on the morning of November 2nd, 1894 that the outlines of Samoa appeared in the distance. What expectations filled us, especially Delia, because she had been very ill during the entire journey at sea. 27 Directly before us this lovely morning was the main village of Samoa—Apia, which had a population of perhaps a little less than three thousand. This village was picturesque, with semi-foreign and native thatched-roof houses peeping at us through the verdant foliage that was everywhere. Our attentions were then diverted to the hulk of a battleship, whose frame lay broadside upon a coral reef and we learned that it was a German ship, the Adler, one of the victims of the hurricane of 1889, when four such ships were wrecked, and about forty smaller craft, with much loss of life. Two of the men-of-war lost were American ships. 28 Our anchor chains were being lowered, for Apia had no wharf. Hundreds of small craft were splashing their way toward our ship. Elder Thomas Hilton, the mission president, came with two natives in the mission boat and took us to the mission headquarters at Pagalli, about three miles down the coast. For Delia's sake, I was thankful to have the journey over, for her two weeks of illness had left her emaciated and weak, so much so that it was necessary to aid her to walk to the house. 29 Besides our group of seven elders, there were eighteen others and Sister Sarah Hilton at the mission headquarters. All missionaries had gathered, as was their custom, from the far

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ends of the island, to get their mail, which came only once a month. Such times were occasions for joyous greetings, exchange of experiences, and pleasant conversations. Delia and I ... kept diligently at the study of the language and the gospel, and took our part in missionary life. Together we did our washing and cooking, and always we studied. ... The house was reasonably comfortable and suited to the climate. Bedclothes were not needed, other than a sheet, but mosquito nettings over the beds were a necessity. Cockroaches were abundant and annoying. 30 We sought to make each other happy, and there was an inflow of the spirit of God because we were devoted to the common cause of doing His work. 31 On March 27th, 1895, President Hilton and his wife, and other missionaries left for their homes in Utah. With prayers and tears we bade them farewell. It was a momentous occasion for Delia, since it left her alone of the women missionaries, to be on the island. She who was so soon to become a mother ... silently yielded to a trying situation and clung to me still more closely as she looked toward an uncertain future. 32 No word of mine can overstate our anxiety as the hour approached.

On May 3rd, 1895, at 1:15 a.m. the baby came. How relieved I was to lay this tiny morsel of life onto the arm of her smiling mother, who, radiant with joy, cuddled the dark-haired girl to her willing breast. We called our new daughter Hazel. "For three weeks, I abandoned everything else to the care of my wife. As I write now after so many eventful years, I can still hear the tick of the clock which marked the hours of my lonely vigil, as night after night, in silence, I watched the life of my beloved ebbing away."

"Then on May 24th of 1895, she closed her eyes to everything mortal." The light of the whole world went out of my life when she was taken." 33

William's two great concerns became Hazel and his mission responsibilities. "I longed mightily to make a success of my mission, despite my loss of spirit for it, so that I should not have to return home a
failure. I arranged with a Mrs. Bell, a school-teacher from England, to care for Hazel, then left for the south side of the island to continue my missionary work. 34

Hazel was carefully cared for by people who loved her, but she had many bouts with sickness. Finally William felt he must send Hazel home. David D. Williams of Thatcher, Hazel's grandfather, planned to meet her in Salt Lake. Hazel sailed for home on April 23, 1896 on the same ship that had brought her parents to Samoa a year and a half earlier. 35 When the ship left the people who had cared for Hazel wept all day. 36

"Three months passed before I could learn of her safe arrival. They were months of anxious waiting, but I learned finally that her trip home had been made more pleasant than I had dared to dream it would be. Her story became known on the ship almost at once, how she had been left motherless and was making the trip without parents, or not even a woman to care for her. Sympathetic friends sprang up right and left. Kind-hearted women gave her a mother's care, and she was showered with gifts.

She thrived with her grandparents, and grew to be a vital and lovely woman, the wife of Eric A. Knudsen. She bore a child of her own and lived in Hawaii." 37

William Moody left the mission field for home May 17, 1898. On October 16, 1907 he was called to serve as mission president in Samoa. He left Salt Lake on February 22, 1908. 38 After arriving in Samoa he wrote: "As may be expected, one of my first acts was to visit the grave of my first wife, Adelia, which was located in a church-owned cemetery." 39

He was very busy during his stay in Samoa as mission president and achieved many constructive and positive goals. He completed the actions necessary to close his work as mission president.

"Before I departed there was one sacred spot I must visit--our little cemetery. I went to the place, ... leaving everything as perfect as possible. Thus, with the simple pilgrimage I had done perhaps the last kind act I should ever be permitted to do with my own hands for the beloved wife of my youth, and the other dear ones whose mortal remains made the spot sacred." 40

Ida Luetta Morgan Roberts and Edgar T. Roberts were married October 20, 1897. They arrived in Samoa December 23, 1897. 41 They endured the usual missionary sufferings of sea sickness,
hunger, thirst, fatigue, language difficulties, boils and sore eyes.

Luetta wrote regarding their arrival and the early period of their adjustment.

"There are the peculiar natives to be seen in their boats, the shore to be looked at, luggage to be gathered up and looked after, and the horror of going ashore in one of those little tubs... Our missionary labor began, first striving to acquire a knowledge of the language, teach school, visit our Saints and do good whenever an opportunity presented itself. What joy I take in going out tracting from house to house with my husband, and to associate with the native women. I often go out and visit with them." 42

Their first child, a boy, Loi, was born 18 August 1898. They began the difficult task of trying to find food that he could tolerate. The child suffered from eye infections and childhood diseases.

A war between native tribes caused sudden changes in the lives of the missionaries. Here follows a quote from the journal kept by Edgar T. Roberts.

"All was very quite this morning up till about 12 o’clock when about 100 natives from the east end of Upolu went past our gate with their guns, axes, knives and war implements, having their faces painted with war paint and wearing their white caps to represent the Mataafa party. The Malietoa wearing red. Just as they had passed which was at 1 p.m. the first report of war was heard by the signals of firing cannons from the men of war in Apia Harbor. The native warriors hadn’t any more than reached the path which leads to Apia until they became frightened of hearing the guns go off and returned the way they came only more quickly. The firing of the cannons was kept up all afternoon and we could see native men and women and children running for their lives. All the natives near and around Fagaliï have gone to the bush, leaving their homes just as they could. On towards 3 o’clock the Porpoise, an English man of war, came right in front of Fagaliï having their guns pointed towards us. They remained in that place for about an hour then steamed back to Apia, during this time a continuous cannon loading was kept up;
their explosive balls bursting in the bush just back of Fagalii and from there in to towards Apia and Pesega where Brother Hendricks and Brother Stringham are. We felt very uneasy having the cannon balls shot toward us, but we trusted in God for protection and safety. Just about sundown, Brother Hendricks came in with a buggy after Luettta and Sister Reid and said that we all had to go to Apia as a man of war was coming to Fagalii to shell that country and if we remained in Fagalii there might be danger to the women. Took just a change of clothes and after locking up the home we all went to Apia, getting there just before dark. We hardly knew where to go for safety in Apia, but as the Lord always provides for his servants, we got the upper room in Mr. Hellesoe’s house. Of course, we all had to make the best of it by sleeping on the board floor and buying some bread, canned meat, etc, which was expensive living for us but we couldn’t help that. We did not get very much sleep that night as there was a continual firing that kept us up all night. The soldiers would think they could see natives in the bush and then they would fire. The man of war kept a continual firing also throwing shells into the bush and surrounding country near Apia. Just 10 steps to the left of us were the American boys with a gatling gun and the English boys to the right with rapid firing guns and some 100 soldiers. Well, so much for the war at present, and I will tell about ourselves. There are eight of us tucked in one room - 6 elders and 2 sisters. (He did not mention the two children, Stewart L. Reid and Loi Roberts.) We have just the clothes we have on our backs and a change of which are dirty, because we can’t get any place to do a little washing. Our meals are two a day consisting of bread, butter, canned meat of different kind and other stuff - if we could afford it, but I tell you means are scarce and expenses high; but we must do the best we can. Nevertheless, Mormons are happy no matter where they are, so it is with us. We have no fear, and don’t want you to worry over us, as we are in the Lord’s care and He will look after us. We don’t worry so much over ourselves.
as we do over poor little Loi, as we have
had nothing to feed him but corn flour and
condensed milk for over a week now, but a
steamer came in yesterday so we can get
some Mellin's food that I want now, so I am
going to lay up a store for a month or two,
as we can't tell how things will turn out.
We look for the better. Oh! yes, we must
tell you that Loi has two teeth, but the
poor little fellow has large sores breaking
out on him all the time, owing to not
having proper food." 43

Their little daughter Harriet Viola was born October 16,
1899. Despite the offering of fervent prayers and the best
medical aid possible, Loi died March 3, 1900 in the Apia
Sanitarium. 44

The parents completed their mission and returned to Afton,
Wyoming June 15, 1900. It is believed that the sudden change from
the tropic temperature to the cold, harsh climate of Star Valley,
Wyoming was the cause of death of the baby Harriet Viola on
January 6, 1901. 45

Another experience in Samoa is that of Ethel Lowry Reid and
Clare W. Reid.

In Manti, Utah in June 1896, the family of Sarah Jane Brown
Lowry, wife of John Lowry Junior, was assembled in her bedroom
praying for her recovery of good health. Eunice Mollen, one of
those present, received the gift of tongues and the
interpretation thereof.

A portion of this interpretation indicated that Ethel Lowry
Reid and her husband Clare W. Reid, "would be called on a mission
to the islands of the sea." 46

Ethel, the youngest daughter and last child of John Lowry
Junior and Sarah Jane Brown Lowry, was very musical as was her
husband Clare Reid. They had been married on October 9, 1895. A
description of the bride and groom read: ". . . she was the most
beautiful bride this town had ever seen, the kind of beauty
touched by a certain fragile quality with a quiet splendor of
spirit, married to a young man of much promise, a handsome
musician." 47

Ethel had been very active in church responsibilities. She
served as secretary of the Primary when she was only ten years
old. In addition to other responsibilities, she served as
president of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association
until June 1898 when she and her husband were called to serve a
mission to Samoa. 48

Letters were received only once a month in Samoa. Ethel and
her family were very close, so letters were frequently received
and sent. Portions of a letter from Ethel to her sisters follow:

On board "Moana"
June 21, 1898
Dear Sisters,

I have been writing to Mamma and papa so will just write a few lines to let you know we are OK. We expect to land at Honolulu about 7 o'clock in the morning. We are looking forward with pleasure to walking on dry land again. We were both very sick-the worst on board so the stewardess told us. It was not until yesterday that I was able to get on deck and that was the fifth day out. ... Clare and I have been playing in the dining room this evening, the first time we have had our instruments out. They seemed to appreciate the music. We had the pictures of Manti and Salt Lake City that you gave us Olive, up on deck today and they proved quite interesting to two or three persons, but we have had no argument as yet tho' it is known among all the second class passengers I suppose that we are Mormons ... have had fine weather so far. Clare joins in sending love to all.

Affectionately
Ethel

 Wednesday June 22 1898

It is now 8:20 and we have been at the Honolulu wharf about an hour. Our vessel brought the annexation news to the Hawaiians. A boat of men came out to meet us to find what the flag signal meant and when they learned they cheered heartily. I am not going to write more as we want to see as much of the city as possible, so by-by till we reach Samoa.

With love
Ethel

The Samoan mission records of 1898 reveal the following extracts.

Wednesday June 29
Elders Don C. McBride and Clare W. Reid and wife, Sister Ethel Lowry Reid, arrived at Fagalli, having made the voyage on the S. S. "Moana". They had with them some few school supplies, and were well equipped for school work. They had an organ and a box of baggage lost in transit, both of which they expected to recover.

Elder Roberts and wife arrived from Savari in the evening, and happy was the
meeting of the two sisters. Brother and Sister Roberts will remain at Fagalli until after Sister Robert's expected confinement in the latter part of July.

Friday July 1

In the evening the usual meeting of welcome to the newcomers was held, that of Sacrament meeting and testimony gathering. ... All were at the meeting which was an inspiring one. At its close Brother and Sister Reid rendered some music on their autoharp, mandolin and viola. Cake from home was also passed around.

Wednesday July 6

Ah Mu & Ah Chini & their families went and surprised Sister Reid on her birthday. They took flowers, oranges, ducks, etc. etc. 51

A letter from Springville, Utah arrived before Christmas. The family at home had learned the happy news that Ethel and Clare were expecting a baby.

November 21 1898

Dear Ethel and Clare:

... We girls had appointed last Friday night to do a piece of work for our little Samoan niece or nephew, and we were to meet at Doras. When we got there we found that Carrie had left a letter from Ethel. We got the work started ... then I read the letter while the other girls worked ... How much we did enjoy reading that nice little News Paper.

What do the natives think of the songs you teach them Clare? Are they nice singers and do they speak the words in their language or learn them in ours? ... I guess it improves the meetings very much to have the music. ...

You look rather care worn in the one [picture] taken with your class. I thought perhaps it was taken just after conference and you were tired after having attended so many meetings and sitting up so late at night. But there is one thing about that picture, it convinces us that you really are pregnant. ...

Love
Olive 52

The history of the Samoan mission revealed two interesting events in 1899.

Wednesday March 29
Sister Reid was confined at 7:30 pm at Apia, she having been in labor all day & part of the previous night. The doctor had to deliver her by surgical aid, which was successfully done, and a fine boy was the result.

Wednesday April 5
Pres. Worsencroft & Elders Reid, Morris and Wright blessed & named Elder Reids baby, the father being mouth; the name given was Stewart Lowry Reid. 53

The Latter-day Saints Millennial Star of Thursday August 3, 1899, reported the following.

SAMOAN MISSIONARY'S EXPERIENCE
A Kaysville, Utah, letter received May 7, from George H. Blood, who is traveling as a Mormon missionary in Samoa, gives a graphic account of some of the tragic scenes that he has witnessed during the Samoan war. It has been thought that Mormon missionaries were absolutely safe, but Mr. Blood's experience shows that they were in imminent danger. He was stationed at Tifitifi and, thinking the war was over, started for Apia. He says: "When I started I knew nothing of the last trouble, but a German called me in and told me they were having a time up the trail and that I would never see Apia. When he saw that I was determined to go he ordered a horse and saddle for me and I started on. After riding two miles I found a village on fire and saw a man-of-war just outside the reef, and, talk about shelling! They were using their eight-inch guns, Browning 'peacemakers' and Nordenfedts. Shells and small bullets flew thick and, burning houses on each side, made me feel like I was a target. All of the houses between that village and Apia, a distance of ten miles, had been burned that morning.

"About eight miles from Apia I was met by 400 Mataafa warriors, painted and well armed. They had been ordered to kill all the whites they could find. Forty or fifty of them flocked around me, brandishing their knives. They were about to take my head off, when one of them saw a book in my coat pocket, which he took, but when he saw it was a tract he said 'faiean' which means 'missionary,' and I told them 'Yes, a
Mormon missionary, and found myself breathing easier.

A SAMOAN DIVERSION

"A half-caste, who could talk English, told me to put up a white flag or they would shoot my brains out. I obeyed orders and moved on, but was stopped about a dozen times by Mataafa men, some of whom leveled guns at me, or raised knives to see me dodge.

"After passing the Mataafa men I met no one for two miles, and then met the Malieota men, and they didn’t believe that I came through the Mataafa lines.

"Apia is under martial law. All of the Mormon Elders from Fagalli are here. They had to leave Fagalli in such a hurry that their things were left behind, and the Mataafa men took everything of value, broke the windows and doors and chopped the furniture to pieces. Our loss is about $1,100."

Mr. Blood tells of the butchery of American and English officers and marines at Fagalli on April 1, and says the wounded officers and men who were left on the field were killed and their heads cut off, the bodies being buried without the heads. The Mormon missionaries witnessed this terrible fight, with 2,500 Mataafa men on one side, against 130 marines and 100 Malieota followers.

The letter closes by saying that there were 5,000 Mataafa men around Apia, all well armed and determined to fight to the last. They have sent in word that they are going to rush in on the town.

The English boats go out every morning, burning native villages along the coast, and the United States boat Philadelphia remains in the bay and throws shells over the town to keep the natives back. The missionaries will be removed to the island of Tutuila for better protection." 55

After the native conflict ceased the following letter was received in Manti, Utah.

Salilavatu Savaii
June 6 1899

My Dear Sisters and Brothers:

... I dont know how to tell you how much we appreciated your letters and the money you sent. ... How glad we were to get the things
you sent with Brother Sears.  
... I don't know how I would have got along without them. I have made some of the little dresses for baby. I didn't think I would need the little stockings but it's been so much cooler here than at Apia that he has had to wear them to keep his little feet warm, so I'm very glad we had them. That is one thing we couldn't buy on Samoa--baby stockings.

Love
Ethel 55

June 8 1899

... We have got our little Samoan house straightened up almost as we want it now and it looks quite nice. There is no floor in either room, just gravel covered with mats. It is very cool and pleasant.

No we don't expect to get any of the things we lost unless its our musical instruments ... but they would be so broken they would be of no use to us. I have tried not to worry over our loss for many things so much worse might come along to try us. ...

You say to tell you what we need ... You sent clothes enough for baby for a good while. Brother and Sister Reid sent Clare some shoes and me a dress. ... My shoes won't last very much longer. I had a pair of slippers stolen at Fagalli and the rats destroyed a pair of shoes at Pesega so I have only one pair left. When you get a chance you may send me a pair of 3 1/2 not too coarse nor too fine just a good durable pair. If I could get any decent shoes here I would but it's impossible. They don't keep anything but slippers and they are very worthless. Only two of my dresses were stolen Dora, a calico I made before coming out, and the one Mamma sent me last fall. We had baby's picture taken ... You will see baby has lost all his pretty hair. After that rash came out on his head and body his hair would come out in bunches and leave the scalp a shiny bald. It's coming in quite thick now, but can't tell whether its red or black. He is two months and ten days old. ... Yes the doctor let me have chloroform a good while before I was delivered...

Olive if you finish babys picture would
you kindly send one to Elder J. Wood, Eureka and one to Brother Stringham Salt Lake City. ... We think a great deal of that man. A brother could not have been better to me when I was sick than he was. He never left my bed side all the afternoon the day baby was born. If you have an extra picture of Clare and I where we are standing you may send it to him also. We want the words to some old songs. We are asked to sing so much, ... May God bless you all

With much love
Ethel

After the birth of Stewart, Ethel's strength did not return. Her health continued to deteriorate so her husband, Clare, finally decided to send her home, as ... missionaries were leaving about that time. In fact, he planned to take her home, but under her most earnest request and solicitation he consented to remain and finish his labor in the mission field. 57

On October 26, 1899 The Deseret News published the announcement of the death of Mrs. Ethel Lowry Reid in Provo, October 25.

"A most sad death occurred this afternoon at the residence of Dr. S. H. Allen, when Mrs. Ethel Lowry Reid passed from this mortal sphere. ... Believing that the pure air of her mountain home would be beneficial to her, her husband prevailed upon her to return home, which she was loath to do. Elder Reid desired to accompany his wife home, but she persuaded him to remain and complete his mission. Mrs. Reid left the islands ... and during the voyage became alarmingly worse. When the party arrived at San Francisco and telegraphic advice was sent to her family, two sisters, accompanied by Dr. Allen, a brother-in-law met her at Ogden on Monday evening and brought her to Provo for medical assistance, but the trip was too much for her. She lingered on until this afternoon when she quietly passed away." 58

The Lowry family members received a letter from Samoa in November 1899. A portion of the letter follows.

Pesepa Samoa
Nov 30 1899

My Dear Brothers and Sisters:
Words fail me. I hardly know what to write ... I assure you tho that I not only mourn on my own account but on yours too and her dear parents. I would like to say

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that which will bring greater peace & comfort to your hearts. That is what came to mine when two weeks after receiving this news, "Ethel died Wednesday. Baby well," I received from the Doctor and my father and brother the full particulars of my dear wifes death. For several days after receiving the cablegram I was in an agony of suspense. There was only one thing to do and that was to seek assurance from above, that "all was well," and that I did more earnestly than I ever did before in my life. I received comfort but my fears were not entirely set at rest until I received your letter. ...

You remember how we parted at the depot at Springville. That parting has always been a bright ray of sunshine in my memory. Ethel and I tried to part in the same way when she left me here for we wished to feel that it was only for a short time. ...

Clare

Another letter was sent from Samoa, portions of which follow.
:Matautu Samoa
:Oct 5 1900

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

... About those pictures of Ethels grave. Is it possible that I have not mentioned them yet? ... I received them long ago and see them every day for they hang just over my table. I cannot imagine that my wife has any connection with the spot. To me she is in Paradise as plainly as you are in Utah ...

... A year ago tomorrow I parted with my wife and babe on the deck of the "Moana". She sat just back from the head of the gang-way a picture of misery out of which beamed courage and cheerfulness. I remained with her as long as possible. Brother Clayton was at the gang-way with Stewart in his arms as I passed down. The boat moved off immediately, and as long as I could distinguish individuals a little white handkerchief fluttered a last farewell. Then I began to fear and took myself severely to task for leaving the boat at all. ...

I will be glad when ... I can ... sit down with you in your own homes.  

God bless you all
In later years Clare Reid was associated with the music department at Brigham Young University and was noted for his methods of teaching piano lessons. While still a young man Stewart, son of Ethel and Clare Reid, met his death by drowning in a tragic accident on Utah Lake.

The following observations appeared in the Young Womans Journal 1899.

Apia, Samoa
September 1899
"Editor Young Woman’s Journal

It is but a few years since we first heard, with some astonishment, that the young ladies of Zion ought to prepare themselves for missions to the world, as their help would soon be needed in spreading the message of truth. It matters little how this admonition was received; heeded or unheeded, the time is here when the sisters are taking an active part in the mission fields.

When the call first went forth, Samoa was as far from people’s minds as the islands themselves are from the rest of the civilized world.

Women are among the Gospel pioneers on these islands: what they endured, their trials and their hardships, even to parting with life itself, it is a story that today dins the eye with tears.

To some, the influence which our lady missionaries wield among us may seem trivial; but ... it reaches out and effects every Elder in the mission and spurs him on ... Its weight, also as a factor in the uplifting of the Samoan people, can not but be deeply felt and appreciated.

...Our sisters come ... directly in contact with Samoa through the children in our schools. Each branch has its little school, varying in numbers from eight or ten to thirty-five or forty. There most of the sisters’ time is spent, and there we see the ... results of their labors. A sister by her very presence commands respect. ... Neatness, cleanliness, taste, all are being carefully brought into prominence.

...In a conversational way they do much, not only among the Saints, but among
strangers as well. Hospitality is a strong characteristic of this people, and among them visiting is very popular ... the door is opened to the sister whenever she goes out making calls, she is always treated kindly and politely, and what she has to say is listened to with respect. In their visiting our sisters spread the truth among this people. ...

...The sisters are of themselves doing a missionary work that could not be accomplished save by their presence here. Their mission commences among the elders themselves, reaches the youngest child in the school room, and extends into the homes of both Saints and strangers. It is plain now why our sisters were called to Samoa - to assist - yes, and more - to fill a long felt want, that they alone could fill."

There were many fine Samoan women who became members of the Church. They also had problems to face, but such problems were confronted in a culture and environment familiar to them.

There were also fine women who stayed at home in Zion to care for their children, and in many instances, worked in every way possible in order to supply funds to support their children and their husbands away in the mission field of Samoa.

The women of Zion who served in the Samoan Mission from 1888 to 1900 left the security of their homes, their familiar surroundings and especially the support of their family and friends to travel with their husbands in response to the call of the Lord, through the authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to serve as missionaries. The change from their way of life in the United States was tremendous, especially because of the isolation from the rest of the world, the new environment and the many events which occurred in Samoa.

The lady missionaries had many personal type routines to perform such as writing letters, caring for living quarters, preparing meals, sewing, washing, and tending children. There were many special responsibilities related to the mission, such as: learning a new language, reading, studying, translating, teaching native children, and teaching other classes. They were also involved in assisting in official activities, such as serving as officers in auxiliary positions, visiting native homes, conducting the singing, and performing musically.

The lady missionaries in the period of 1888 to 1900 exhibited deep, abiding faith, courage and devotion to their religious beliefs by their willingness to sacrifice. All of them faced the difficulties of an environment and culture entirely foreign to them. Among the members of the group some faced the horror and hazards of civil war, some faced the fury of the hurricane seasons and other elements of the weather, some faced
the death of children, one faced the death of a husband, and several sacrificed their own lives.

These courageous women who were so diligent and faithful in their missionary labor made a significant and positive contribution to the Samoan mission. For surely their "price is far above rubies." 62
Appendix A

Women from Zion in the Samoan Mission: 1888-1900

Following is a list of names of missionary couples from Zion who were called to serve in the Samoan Mission from 1888 to 1900. The dates of their arrivals are also noted. Records taken from Samoan Mission Records. Film 7852. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1888. Salt Lake City. LDS Church Historical Department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ARRIVAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Florence Ridges Dean and Joseph H. Dean</td>
<td>18 June 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Louise Calder Lee and William O Lee</td>
<td>10 October 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Katie Hale Merrill and Joseph H. Merrill</td>
<td>23 March 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sarah McMurrin Hilton and Thomas H. Hilton</td>
<td>17 April 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Annie D. Stevens and Ransom M. Stevens</td>
<td>17 April 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Margaret Durham and Alfred M. Durham</td>
<td>17 March 1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ella Adelia Moody and William A. Moody</td>
<td>2 November 1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Esther Whitbeck and Joseph R. Whitbeck</td>
<td>30 September 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ida Luetta Morgan Roberts and Edgar Thomas Roberts</td>
<td>23 December 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ethel Lowry Reid and Clare W. Reid</td>
<td>29 June 1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Margaret R. Taylor and Jedediah Taylor</td>
<td>21 October 1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Myra Longhurst and Warren Longhurst</td>
<td>17 December 1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Agnes M. Sears</td>
<td>8 February 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and William G. Sears</td>
<td>3 May 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. R. Minnie Hinck and Joseph Hinck</td>
<td>2 May 1900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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2 Britsch, p. 16

3 Britsch. p. 18


5 Britsch. p. 17

6 Britsch. p. 18


9 Harris.

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13 Jenson. Biographical. p. 683

14 Harris. Appendix: Mission Presidents. unpaged.

15 Harris. Appendix: Mission Presidents. unpaged.

16 Deseret News. 8 June 1894. p. 1

17 Deseret News. 8 June 1894. p. 1

18 Deseret News. 8 June 1894. p. 1

19 Deseret News. 12 June 1894.

20 Deseret News. 7 June 1894.

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24 Moody. p. 50
25 Moody. p. 53
26 Moody. p. 54
27 Moody. p. 55
28 Moody. p. 56
29 Moody. p. 56
30 Moody. p. 57
31 Moody. p. 58
32 Moody. p. 59
33 Moody. p. 60
34 Moody. p. 61
35 Moody. p. 81
36 Moody. p. 81
37 Moody. p. 81-82
38 Harris. Appendix: Mission Presidents. unpaged.
39 Moody. p. 141
40 Moody. p. 171
41 Samoan Mission Records. Film 7852.
42 Young Woman's Journal. 11 (January 1900): 127
43 Harris. pp. 195-196
44 Dunn. p. 26
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