

Eliza Ann Westover Redd



Born: 17 December 1854, Salt Lake City, Utah
Died: 17 March 1938, Salt Lake City, Utah
Married: Lemuel Hardison Redd, Jr.; April 11, 1878
Father: Charles Westover
Mother: Eliza Ann Havens

Early Years

On December 17, 1854, Eliza Ann Westover was born as a ray of shining light on a cold winter day in Salt Lake City, Utah. Her parents, Charles and Eliza Ann Havens Westover, were delighted with the arrival of their little girl. Eliza's family lived in the beautiful Cottonwood area at the base of the Wasatch mountains and she spent happy years there as a young child. When she was eight years old, her parents were asked by Brigham Young to assist in the settlement of southwestern Utah. They willingly responded and set off for Washington County to start a new adventure.

Eliza lived with her family in Washington County until she returned to Salt Lake City as an adult to attend the University of Deseret (present-day University of Utah). She was a bright student and excelled in her studies to become a teacher. But books and classroom lectures were not the only things that caught her attention. A quiet, serious, kind young man named Lemuel Redd, Jr., also caught her eye. Lemuel was studying to be a teacher and between classes and coursework, they spent as much time together as they could. When it came time for them both to graduate, they sadly said goodbye, hoping to see each other soon. Lemuel had a job teaching in New Harmony and Eliza's pupils were waiting for her in Pinto. They saw each other on weekends as often as they could, but found it harder and harder to be apart. On April 11, 1878, their long-distance courtship came to a very happy end, and they were married in the St. George Temple for time and all eternity.

Hole-in-the-Rock

Eliza and Lem had been married for two years and had just celebrated the birth of their daughter Lulu, when the call from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to settle southeastern Utah and establish a better relationship with the Indians in that area. Excited at the prospect of furthering the growth of the Church and themselves, they accepted the call and headed for Escalante to begin the journey.

Eliza was never a woman to shirk in the face of hard work, and she knew well that the adventure they were embarking on would be just that. With her baby Lulu on her lap, or lying on a small feather bed behind her, she drove a wagon team the entire way. In the evenings, Eliza and the other women prepared meals for the weary company and set about making everyone as comfortable as they could. She looked forward to the time when someone would invariably pull out a fiddle or harmonica and start to play a song. They would all sing, dance, laugh and count their blessings as the moon rose and the stars filled the vast desert sky. Eliza's daughter recalled her mother telling of her fond memories of those nights on the trail. "Our mother . . . told of these wonderful evenings when all the hurt feelings and disgruntled tempers were 'washed away' in fun under the stars."ⁱ

It was anticipated that the expedition to southeastern Utah would take about two months. Instead, it took six. This unexpected extension created a shortage of everything from dynamite, to clothing, to flour. Fortunately for those who traveled alongside her, Eliza was resourceful. Ingredients were limited but her creativity was not. From their staples of dried fruit, honey and flour, Eliza would make meals that had everyone asking for more. Years later she would make some of these same born-in-the-rough creations for her own children. Her daughter recalled, "As Mother told and retold of how she baked bread and spread it with stewed dried peaches on the thick slices, I always became very hungry. . . . I had to have a slice of bread with peach-spread. One time as she was telling about those trying times, I asked her, 'Mother, how did you ever stand such hardships?' I shall never forget her look of shocked surprise as she answered, 'why those were the happiest days of my life; the men and women in that party came to genuinely love each other. We were closely welded into one big family.'"ⁱⁱ

When Eliza, Lem, little Lulu and the rest of the Hole-in-the-Rock "family" finally arrived at the San Juan River, they rejoiced. The long journey was over and a new life was about to begin. They called their new town Bluff, and Eliza didn't waste any time getting settled. Once her two-room log cabin was built, she went about assisting others. With her helping hands, she brought a merry heart. Establishing a new community, building new homes, and paving a new path on the frontier were all stressful, draining tasks; the cheer Eliza spread was much needed, especially in relation to the Indians.

Life in Bluff

A fear of the Indians lurked in the minds of all who lived in Bluff. Eliza knew that a primary reason for Church leaders to colonize the area where they now lived was to build positive relationships with the Indians. She set about to make this happen. "Forth-right and unafraid, she showed her friendliness by feeding them. Very soon the Indians, both Navajo and Ute, discovered that [Eliza] was indeed their friend."ⁱⁱⁱ They came often, patiently waiting on her doorstep for something to eat. No one was ever sent away hungry, and often she would send them

home with a bit of food for their families. But Eliza was not one to just give handouts. She would call on her new Native friends when she needed help with washing clothes or cleaning the house, and they would happily assist her. Eliza's children learned first-hand to trust the Indians, and the sentiment quickly spread throughout the community.

The Indians were not the only ones who liked Eliza's cooking. Her family and neighbors were also happy benefactors. To provide for the steady stream of hungry visitors, she planted a beautiful garden and orchard. Eliza had learned the art of gardening from her father, who was a master gardener, and was richly rewarded for her efforts; fresh fruits and vegetables were always in abundance. She canned and preserved what was not immediately needed and taught others to do the same. The Redd family did not have many of the luxuries of the world, but they always had healthy food and strong able bodies because of it. This was a tremendous blessing during a time when professional health care was hard to find.

Family Life

Eliza's strong, healthy body allowed her the blessing of bearing many children. "Between the years 1879 and 1896, she had eight children: Lulu, Hattie Ellen, Lemuel Hardison III, Herbert Haven, Edith, Charles, Marion, and Amy."^{iv} She loved her children with all her heart, and they knew it. Eliza made sure birthdays and holidays were fully celebrated and memorable for her children, even when money was scarce. They also knew how much she loved their father. When Church leaders advised Lem to take a second wife, Eliza's support did not waiver for even a moment. She said, "Lem, you have been advised to do this and you must do it."^v There was no further discussion and shortly after, Eliza, Lemuel, and Lucy Zina Lyman, went to the St. George Temple for the marriage. Eliza was always fond of "Aunt Lucy," as she was called, and they shared the same home for several years. Their husband was a very busy man, and together they successfully managed the affairs of the household. Eliza, in particular, acted as Lem's "secretary" when he was away from home.^{vi} He trusted her ability to follow his instructions regarding the management of the livestock, and wrote her detailed letters about how to keep the ranch working smoothly. She carefully kept track of their important family and business documents as well.

Though neither Lem nor Eliza ever returned to the vocation of teaching, they both deeply valued the education they had received and wanted the same for their children. As a legislator, Lem visited the University of Utah, Brigham Young University and the Agricultural College in Logan (present day Utah State). He was impressed and wrote the following letter to Eliza, dated February 3, 1899: "I am willing to make any reasonable sacrifice that our children may get an education and religious training at the same time."^{vii} Sacrifices were made and all of their children went on to receive higher education.

Education for all, not just her children, was important to Eliza Redd. As president of the Bluff Relief Society, she was keenly interested in strengthening her fellow sisters' knowledge of the gospel. She encouraged them to study and gain a testimony of their own, and could often be found sharing hers. Eliza also served in the Primary and in the Stake Relief Society presidency. Eliza's testimony was like her will—firm, steadfast and full of love.

After miraculously being healed from a deep, painful burn and the gangrenous infection that followed, Eliza suffered valiantly through several strokes, and painful arthritis before finally being called from this life to the next. She died on March 17, 1938 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Eliza Ann Redd lived life to the fullest, and made it a little sweeter for all those who knew her.

*Researched and written for the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation by:
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"Funeral Services for Mother Planned." Obituary notice for Eliza Ann Westover Redd from the files of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, UT.

ⁱ Jesse L. Embry, *La Sal Reflections: A Redd Family Journal* (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Foundation, 1984) 179.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 179, 181.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 181.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, 182.

^v *Ibid.*

^{vi} *Ibid.*, 183.

^{vii} *Ibid.*