

Research Report on the Birth of  
Echo Workman Geary Hanley  
***The Second Birth in Echo Canyon***  
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## Introduction and Background

In September 2009, my wife Mary Lou and I were returning from a stay in Oregon. Usually we make a direct route from Oregon through Boise, Burley, Snowville and along the Wasatch front into the Salt Lake area. As we travelled through Idaho, the thought came to me that perhaps we should make a detour and visit the sites in Wyoming and northeastern Utah where our pioneer ancestors travelled in the winter of 1856. My wife's great great grandfather, Lars Madsen, died at Devil's Gate while travelling with the Hodgett Wagon Company<sup>1</sup>. My great grandmother, Sophia Ann Geary was just 3 years old when she and her parents came through Wyoming. They were with the Siler Wagon Company<sup>2,3</sup> when they left Florence, Nebraska. The Siler Company travelled first with the Willie Handcart Company in a support role until they arrived at Ft. Laramie. The handcarts realizing that it was late in the season, continued on immediately. The Siler Company, having lost animals in the 'buffalo stampede' remained for a period in Ft. Laramie, and was attached to and traveled with the Hodgett Wagon Company<sup>4</sup> until they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on Dec. 15, 1856.

We by-passed the turnoff to Snowville, and proceeded on to Pocatello, Idaho Falls and on over to Jackson Hole. This is beautiful country to drive through, and I was reminded of the many times as a youth travelling this same countryside with my father, who grew up in the Rexburg vicinity. He homesteaded with his parents in Greentimber, Idaho, just east of Ashton. The distant Teton Peaks were a vista for my father every day of his early youth, and a fascination for him throughout his life. So we spent the night in

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<sup>1</sup> "Emigrating Journals of The Willie and Martin Handcart Companies and The Hunt and Hodgett Wagon Trains" By Lynne Slater Turner. © 1996.

<sup>2</sup> "Sweetwater Rescue: The Willie and Martin Handcart Story", By Heidi Swinton and Lee Groberg. ©2006. Published by Covenant Communications, Inc., American Fork, Utah. See inside back cover for members of the Siler Company.

<sup>3</sup> Email from Lynne Turner to John Eldredge, copied to Kaye Nichols. October 13, 2009. "The Geary folks ... he was driving an Independent Wagon with Capt Siler, and started with [the]Willie Company, and at Fort Laramie, [He] stayed there to wait for the Hunt and Hodgett Wagon Trains...Lots of confusion..."

<sup>4</sup> "The Fate of the Fryers", Compiled by Bessie "Bess" Snow, 1973. Privately Published. Page22. Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols (April 2010). "We came into this place on the 15<sup>th</sup>," as recorded in a letter by John T. Geary to Jane Jorden on January 3, 1857. This is the date that the Hodgett Wagon Company arrived in Salt Lake City.

Jackson Hole, and early the following morning drove north along the base of those beautiful Teton Mountains.

As we drove, Mary Lou and I rehearsed the lives of our ancestors. Realizing that we were approaching the October Conference of 2009, our thoughts turned to the scene of October Conference of 1856.<sup>5</sup> Brigham Young had been brought word that there were several companies of Saints who had left late in the season, and were facing the early snows and cold weather of the High Plains of Wyoming. At Conference the next morning, Brigham Young declared, “Go and bring in those people now on the plains.”<sup>6</sup>

We drove on through the mountains, in our most comfortable SUV, and as we came over the Wind River Mountain passes, we encountered road construction for some 20 or 30 miles. Not only did we have the inconvenience of the construction, we encountered the heavy snow which had fallen during the previous night. The road was mostly frozen, snow packed, muddy, with the temperatures reading in the teens. It was slow and the driving conditions were treacherous. Of course our minds recalled what had happened some 153 years previously, and what conditions our ancestors had faced. Our recollections were a result of the stories and tales we had heard all our lives. We didn’t like what we had to drive through, but we were warm, comfortable, and knew that we would be sleeping in a comfortable bed that night. Lander, Wyoming was our next stop.

The following morning we were anxious to get going, and we sought out the sights as we drove along those mountain ranges and high plains. The first pioneer site we were to see was “Ice Spring Slough”. It was indeed a sobering experience for us for the next two days as we imagined the circumstances of our ancestral loved ones. The Great Divide Basin, part of the Continental Divide, and the surrounding areas of 2009 had just received a new covering of snow the previous several nights. We travelled in sunshine, but it was very cold as we visited the sixth crossing of the Sweetwater, Devil’s Gate, Independence Rock, Martin’s Cove, Rock Creek, and contemplated what the conditions of 1856 must have been like. It seared more deeply into my being just what blessings we possess because of the great struggles and sacrifices of our stalwart ancestors. The above mentioned locations, even today in 2010, are in desolate, lonely, foreboding locations. As the vernacular goes, “in the middle of nowhere!”

## **Echo Canyon and Echo Workman Geary**

After visiting these sites, and as we made our way back towards our home in Midway, Utah, it was with quiet contemplation of what ‘we’ had just experienced. How does one even conjure in our imagination what they experienced? We drove on until we came to Echo Canyon. I have read some articles on the Utah War of 1857-58<sup>7</sup>, as well as

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<sup>5</sup> “Sweetwater Rescue: The Willie and Martin Handcart Story” as told by Heidi Swinton and Lee Groberg. Published by Covenant Communications, Inc, American Fork, Utah. September 2006. Page54.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Page 54, See Footnote 19. Brigham Young, “Remarks,” 5 Oct. 1856 as reported in the *Deseret News*, 15 Oct. 1856.”

<sup>7</sup> “The British Mission During the Utah War, 1857-58” by Richard D. Poll. A revised version of a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association in Oxford, England, July 6, 1987.

some histories of the Handcart/Wagon Companies who came through this canyon. I had a particular interest because of family lore about the sister of my great grandmother being born in Echo Canyon<sup>8</sup>. As we came down into the canyon, my wife and I were about ready for a road break, and we saw the Echo Canyon Visitor's Center. We stopped, stretched and peered up at the canyon walls with visions of what secrets this canyon's walls hid from our view. We went into the Visitor's Center, making the obligatory walk around the large room and studying the photographs, paintings and exhibits. We began formulating many questions in our minds. We stepped over to the Information counter and visited with the older woman who was the hostess for the day. When she didn't have the answers to our questions, she reached under the counter and retrieved several books of her own and said we could look through them. One was about the Utah War<sup>9</sup> and the other about historic sites in the canyon and southwestern Wyoming<sup>10</sup>. Both books were written by the same author, John Eldredge. After a quick view of the books, I determined that I would like copies of these books for my own library. I asked the hostess about their availability. She was a member of the Coalville Historical Society, and said that they had copies of one of the books, but didn't know about the other. I found the email address of the author, John Eldredge, in the book, copied it down and determined to contact him when I returned home.

I wrote an email to Mr. Eldredge on October 6, 2009, and inquired about the availability of his books, their costs and how I could obtain them. In the course of the email, I mentioned my interest in the canyon because of my family's history there, mentioning the birth of Echo Workman Geary on November 26, 1855<sup>11</sup>, which turned out to be an impossible date. I had no idea what a beehive of activity I had just initiated. John wrote back immediately<sup>12</sup>, wanting to know more particulars about this birth. Being uninformed of the details of the movements of the Handcart/Wagon Companies and their timetables, and the rescue efforts which that fateful winter brought, I was about to get a crash course in what has become a convoluted and time consuming pioneer research project for me.

John asked me questions. I would go to family sources and try to satisfy his questions. He would just write back asking more questions, but by this time he had

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<sup>8</sup> "The Fate of the Fryers", Compiled by Bessie "Bess" Snow, 1973. Privately Published. Page22. Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols (April 2010). Bess is making reference to Richard Fryer's Journal which states, "The baby was born November 26, 1855." The date 1855 had to be either an incorrect entry by Richard, or it could have been in incorrect quoting by Bess of Richard's Journal entry. 1855 is just not possible.

<sup>9</sup> "The Utah War: A Guide to the Historic Sites South Pass to Camp Floyd" by John Eldredge. ©2008.

<sup>10</sup> "Illustrated Emigrants' Guide to the historic sites along the Hastings/Mormon Trail: Fort Bridger to the Salt Lake Valley", by John Eldredge. 2005. Published by TrailBuff.com Press, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>11</sup> "The Fate of the Fryers", Compiled by Bessie "Bess" Snow, 1973. Privately Published. Page17. Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols (April 2010). Bess is making reference to Richard Fryer's Journal which states, "The baby was born November 26, 1855." The date 1855 had to be either an incorrect entry by Richard, or it could have been in incorrect quoting by Bess of Richard's Journal entry. 1855 is just not possible.

<sup>12</sup> Email from John Eldredge to Kaye Nichols, Oct. 7, 2009. "I have contacts at the Church History Department. They are Richard Turley and Michael Landon. I have taken my original letter to them and they have made digital copies for the church history library. . . . I think it is important to get this information recorded."

enlisted his historian friends, both private<sup>13</sup> as well as the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints<sup>14, 15</sup>. They would all ask questions, and John Eldredge was the middle man in all of this activity. The pointed questions amongst all these exchanges were essentially, “Where are your sources? What documentation do you have?” I thought it would be a simple solution. Just go to my grandparent’s genealogical records, of which I have been caretaker, and retrieve the information. It didn’t work! They had the birth of Echo Geary recorded as “26 Nov. 1856”. The resource persons, with whom I was now interacting, are consummate historians, understanding details, timelines, and knowing a great deal more about sources which had incidental meaning to me at the time. The central interest in all of these exchanges centered on the fact that nobody seems to have known about a “second” birth in Echo Canyon among the two handcart or the two wagon companies who were traveling during this winter of 1856. It is documented that Echo Squires was born in Echo Canyon on November 26, 1856<sup>16</sup>. Her parents were traveling with the Martin Handcart Company<sup>17</sup>. The timeline for the Martin Handcart Rescue would place them in Echo Canyon at this time. What is this “second” birth of a child named Echo during this winter? Any time something new challenges an existing, documented storyline, it upsets our reconstruction of these traveling parties, especially since they have been so well publicized for nearly 155 years. In the aftermath of the events of that winter, the subsequent rescue of four separate traveling parties from the extreme elements of the day, the finding of them and bringing them into the Great Salt Lake Valley must have resulted in great confusion in the recording of the events of those few weeks, particularly since Echo was born just days before they entered ‘the valley’. When and where was this ‘second’ birth? This needs to be answered!

## The Search for Echo’s Birth Begins

How does one go about organizing this kind of search? I thought, well, I could go to the living children or grandchildren of Echo and perhaps they could give me her birth date, even though at the time I was unacquainted with them. I could go to distant relatives of mine who may be able to provide me the information. Certainly in today’s world, census<sup>18</sup>, church records, family records, town records would contain this type of information. They all proved elusive. It was now time for me to personally start digging for the documented information I needed.

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<sup>13</sup> Email from John Eldredge to Kaye Nichols, Oct. 7, 2009. Gives reference to ‘Lynne Turner’, ‘Lyndia Carter’.

<sup>14</sup> Email from John Eldredge to Kaye Nichols, Oct. 7, 2009. Gives reference to historians of Church History Department, i.e. Richard Turley & Michael Landon.

<sup>15</sup> Email from John Eldredge to Kaye Nichols, Oct. 8, 2009. Historian at Church History Department, Mel Bashore.

<sup>16</sup> “*Emigrating Journals of The Willie and Martin Handcart Companies and The Hunt and Hodgett Wagon Trains*” Written and Compiled by Lynne Slater Turner, August 1996. Page160.

<sup>17</sup> “*Sweetwater Rescue: The Willie and Martin Handcart Story*” by Heidi Swinton and Lee Groberg, published by Covenant Communications, Inc., American Fork, Utah, 2006. Inside front cover.

<sup>18</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Idaho, Shoshone County, Kellogg Precinct, Enumerated 28<sup>th</sup> day of June 1900, Page 35 A, Line 42. Wife of Kennedy Hanley. Echo’s Birth ‘Dec. 1859’. Age ‘40’. Children ‘2’, living children ‘2’. Place of Echo’s birth, ‘Utah’. No. of years married, ‘21’.

My first task pointed to the book written in 1973 by Bessie “Bess” Snow, “*The Fate of the Fryers*”. Bess is a granddaughter of Jane Fryer Jorden Harrison. In her book she has transcribed portions of the Journal of Richard Fryer (where is the Journal?); transcribed the original letters (where are they?) which were exchanged between Jane Fryer, Richard Fryer, Sophia Fryer, John Thomas Geary, Richard Harrison, Frank Jorden; and the Iron Mission and Richard Harrison’s work with iron making in southern Utah. The location of original sources which Bess referred to in her book are unknown. I have written to a number of her nieces, nephews and cousins, and her sister’s children. None of them seem to know where the original letters and histories have ended up.

I knew that both Bess Snow and her sister Elizabeth Beckstrom were school teachers in the St. George area. The thought came to me that perhaps Bess made a gift of her papers and materials to Dixie College. In contacting the Library at Dixie College, I was informed that no such donations had been made by Bessie Snow to the College.<sup>19</sup> Bonnie Percival of Dixie College Library did pass along contact information to me of a Gwin Beckstrom Winn, a daughter of Elizabeth Beckstrom who is a sister to Bessie. When Bessie died, Gwin inherited Bessie’s home in Pine Valley, Utah.<sup>20</sup> I inquired as to the whereabouts of the materials that Bess used to compile her book. Gwin assured me that when she went into the home after Bess’ funeral, there were no letters, papers, photos etc. She is at a loss as to where they would have gone. Had Bessie given them to an institution? Perhaps she found someone in the family who promised to safeguard them. Gwin then related to me that some time after Bess’ death, she was contacted by a Diane Farmer from the BYU Library. She said that she represented BYU and was looking for old books, particularly LDS books long out of print. Elizabeth gave her about 10 or 12 old books from Bess’ home.

This seemed to be promising, so I visited the Harold B. Lee Library at BYU, and made contact with John M. Murphy, “*Curator of 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Century Western and Mormon Americana Manuscripts, L. Tom Perry Special Collection*”. I related what information I had, and inquired about the Diane Farmer who had come representing BYU. John Murphy was not acquainted with her. In a subsequent visit that I made to BYU, John informed me that he had been to the BYU Human Resource Department to inquire about her. He then assured me that no Diane Farmer had ever been employed at BYU, either as an adult employee or as a student. John did find, however, that there was a Diane Farmer who had been a student at BYU in the 1980’s, but who had since deceased. My first big disappointment and strike out.

In a return phone call to Gwin Winn, I related my conversation with John Murphy and Gwin clarified for me that the woman to whom she was making reference was a Diane “Snow” Farmer, the daughter of Craig Snow. Gwin said that this Diane Farmer to whom she was making reference, most likely would be a different individual, since Diane Snow

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<sup>19</sup> Email from Bonnie Percival, Dixie College Library, November 13, 2009, to Kaye P. Nichols.

<sup>20</sup> Bess Snow’s home in Pine Valley is located at 17 W. Main St., across the street from the “Old Tithing Office”.

Farmer was still living in 2009, she thought in the Layton, Utah area. I am no further along in locating the Bess Snow papers.

I then sought information from Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Utah, to inquire as to their possible reception of materials from Bessie Snow of Pine Valley, to their Library Collections. Again the response came back negative; SUU has not been the recipient of any donations to their collections from Bessie Snow.

In furthering my attempt to enlarge my circle of Fryer contacts, I went to the New Family Search<sup>21</sup>. There I found several contributors whom I was able to identify. One such contact was Suzanne Swindle Johnston, the daughter of a cousin to Bess Snow. She mentioned how as a young person, prior to her research days, that she would travel with her father to Pine Valley, Utah and spend time visiting with Bess. Suzanne recalls, years later, visiting Bess and asking specific questions about family history. Bess would get up out of her chair, go to her bedroom, her private library, rustle through her materials, return to the living room and share items with Suzanne. “*Bess would never allow anyone into her private library*”, Suzanne recounts. One time she asked Bess if she had a picture of their ancestor, Jane Fryer. Bess answered “*no*”, that she did not have any pictures. However, Suzanne recalls that “*I could look through the door into the bedroom and see a large, framed picture of Jane hanging above Bess’ bed, and yet she denied having such a thing*”<sup>22</sup>.

I am still seeking persons who could possibly know of the whereabouts of Bess’ resources. The original letters and Journals would be an exciting discovery in and of themselves, but I would like to see some of the original letters from my great, great grandmother and grandfather. It is obvious Bess had some of these during her compiling of the story of the Fryers. Would any of these records contain references to Echo’s birth? It is an intriguing possibility. Suzanne did add that knowing Bess as she did, Bess **would have taken very good care of those materials**. She was very possessive of what materials she had.

## What can we learn from Census Records

My next pursuit was to see what information I could extract from the Census Records<sup>23</sup> that were available to us.

- 1) 1860 U.S. Census: Echo’s age is listed as age 3. This extrapolates to her birth to approximately 1857. Close but not quite there. This record verifies that there was indeed a child by the name of Echo Workman Geary, daughter of John Thomas and Sophia Geary.
- 2) 1870 U. S. Census: Echo’s age is reported as 14. This would point to her birth as being in 1856. Again close, but general, agreeing with known information.

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<sup>21</sup> Email from Suzanne Johnston to Kaye Nichols, 2009

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> U. S. Census Records from Ancestry.com.

- 3) 1880 Census: Echo's age is 23 and 'born in Utah'. Birth in '1857'. Conflicting information, nothing definitive.
- 4) 1900 U. S. Census: Her age is 40, and the birth being in **December** 1859. The month is a great lead, the year is misleading, and her age dependent upon when the enumeration of the census was made. Either age 40 or 41. Another variable would be who the provider of the information to the enumerator was. Did they know her birth month, but not the specific year? Possible.
- 5) 1910 U. S. Census: Her age is stated as 60 and being born in Nevada, both of which we know are not true.
- 6) 1920 U. S. Census: Her age is 58 and being born in Utah. The age is incorrect.
- 7) 1930 U. S. Census: Her age is 66 and born in Utah. Her birth year would extrapolate to 1864. The older Echo gets, the more inconsistent her age becomes.

In summary, we work from the known to the unknown. Echo and her parents are *known* to have traveled with Capt. Andrew J. Siler's Independent Wagons, first with the Willie Handcart Company, and lastly with the Hodgett Wagon Company from Ft. Laramie to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Therefore the birth year for Echo is **1856**, for certain. All other references to her birth year can be ignored. We *know* Echo to have been born in the Utah Territory. Therefore the listing of any other State or Territory would be incorrect and can be dismissed. The one encouraging bit of information which we can extract from the Census Records is that 'someone' gave the enumerator her birth month in the 1900 Census as being in the month of December. As of yet, we still cannot confirm Echo's birth date from what known records are available to us. However, this is an intriguing lead.

## **Death Certificate of Echo Workman Geary Hanley**

One would think that a Death Certificate issued in the 1930's would contain correct information on a person's birth. My cousin, Andrea Conley, had found an obituary for Echo, written in the Los Gatos newspaper. Believing that she died in Los Gatos, and I, having a daughter who works in San Jose, which is right next to Los Gatos, I enlisted her services to visit the County Recorder's office for me. She was able to obtain Echo Geary Hanley's Death Certificate<sup>24</sup> and send it to me. At first I was excited, and anxiously looked forward to having it in hand. It did not take long for my disappointment to surface. The information on her Death Certificate lists her as the 'Widow of Kennedy J. Hanley'; the informant as 'L.E. Hanley of Wallace, Idaho' [later found to be Lewis Eugene Hanley, probably a nephew to her husband]; her birth place given as 'Silver City, Nevada'[known to be incorrect]; her birth year is given as 'about 1861'[known to incorrect]; the Certificate indicates her residence in the State of California to have been '18 years'; her residence in the City of Los Gatos is stated to have been '16 years'; her father's name listed as

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<sup>24</sup> Certified Copy of Vital Records, State of California, County of Santa Clara. Death Certificate for Echo Geary Hanley. Local Registration No. 37, (478). Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols, December 2009.

‘unknown’[however, we do know who he is]; and her mother’s name left blank[again, we know her]. It is obvious that the informant, who was providing the information, knew little about Echo’s family. The Death Certificate was of no value in learning of her month and year of birth.

## Naming of Echo – Workman - Geary

The next clue concerns Echo’s middle name, “Workman”. What possible information could this provide? On January 3, 1857, John T. Geary wrote a letter to his wife’s sister, Jane Fryer Jorden Harrison. In a postscript he states, “*I must say we have two little responsibilities living. Sophy and another little girl born back at the mouth of Echo Canyon therefore we named her Echo then added the name Workman after our Captain. I think you are aware our little boy, Thomas Fryer [Geary], died last January*”<sup>25</sup>.

As I fed information to John Eldredge, he would consult with his colleagues and refer information he garnered back to me. One such exchange stated, “*I just got a call from Michael Landon at the Church History Library. The name Workman was a puzzle because there were no Workman’s listed with the 1856 companies. He has found [that] the Albert Workman was one of the rescue team.*”<sup>26</sup> Having been blessed with the rescue efforts in their time of peril, John T. Geary and his wife were obviously grateful for the assistance given by the Captain of their rescue team. When Sophia went into labor and was about to deliver, they would have stopped the wagon to allow for the birth to take place. Capt. Workman must have been solicitous of the Geary’s situation and he would have given all the assistance he possibly could, and yet be mindful of his purpose in rescuing them from the severe conditions with which they were faced. So naming their new daughter Workman after the name of their rescue Captain would certainly make sense, giving honor, gratitude and thanks to this man.

One reference attributed to John T. Geary states that they went through snow drifts 16 feet deep. John Eldredge related the following, “*The Hodgett Company entered Echo Canyon on December 11<sup>th</sup> and arrived at the Weber River on December 12<sup>th</sup>. If my assumption is true that would mean that Echo Workman Geary was born on either December 11<sup>th</sup> or some time on December the 12<sup>th</sup>. This is consistent with John Geary’s report of snow drifts 16 feet high.*”<sup>27</sup> Our conclusion, again taking known information and applying it to the Geary’s situation, would give us a close proximity of Echo’s birth as being some time after December 7<sup>th</sup>, and more likely around the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> of December. Now we seem to be substantiating the fact that Echo could not have been born on November 26<sup>th</sup>, of 1856. Any references we find in family lore to her birth on Nov. 26th can be dismissed with what we now know.

<sup>25</sup> “*The Fate of the Fryers*”, Compiled by Bessie “Bess” Snow, 1973. Privately Published. Page22. Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols (April 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Email from John Eldredge to Kaye Nichols, October 8, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Email from John Eldredge to Kaye Nichols, October 13, 2009.

## The Family of Echo Workman Geary

The parents of Echo were John Thomas Geary and Sophia Fryer, native to England. John Thomas Geary was born in 1823 in Atterton, Leicestershire, England. Sophia Fryer was born in Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight in 1829. While living in London, the Geary's joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1851<sup>28</sup>. They immigrated to America in 1853<sup>29</sup>, and Sophia gave birth to their first child, Sophia Ann Geary<sup>30</sup>, just days after their arrival in America. They traveled to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where they remained for three years, during which time their second child, Thomas Fryer Geary was born on 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1855<sup>31</sup>. He died at about 5 months of age in January of 1856<sup>32</sup>. Sophia was pregnant in 1856, when the Geary's embarked on their journey west with the Willie Handcart Company. Echo was born in 1856<sup>33</sup>, and was followed successively by Eliza Jane Geary, Leah Fryer Geary, and Sarah Ann "Annie" Geary.

The family settled in Cedar City, Utah for a brief time and then settled in Toquerville, Utah by about 1860. Echo would have been about 3+ years old in 1860. After settling in Toquerville, marital discord arose, and for a number of years, Echo's father was back and forth between in Salt Lake and Toquerville. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1866, Echo composed a letter to President Brigham Young requesting a Bill of Divorcement<sup>34</sup>. John T. Geary was residing in Salt Lake at the time, and it is apparent from the response by Pres. Young to Sophia, that Pres. Young had spoken with John Thomas Geary. Pres. Young asked John to write "his wishes and feelings,<sup>35</sup>" that Pres. Young might have information upon which to act. In the letter, he counseled Sophia to reconsider her request by stating, "Your better course, I think, will be to accept his acknowledgements and be reconciled forthwith. You cannot do any better anywhere else. [signed] Brigham Young".<sup>36</sup> We have no other evidence that Sophia was granted a divorce by Pres. Young, unless it was just by decree. The matter became mute just six weeks later when John Thomas Geary died.

By December 1866, Echo's father was living in Salt Lake City. On December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1866, John T. Geary was shot while target practicing<sup>37</sup>. The bullet entered his body just below the left lung, passing through the body. He lived for about a week, expiring on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1867<sup>38</sup>. Echo would have turned 10 years old just a month prior to the death of her father. Sophia Geary had 5

<sup>28</sup> FHL British Film # 87003 Item 6 & 9. "Early Church Membership" (Minnie Margetts File) Entry No. 911, 928. Theobald's Road Branch, London Conference, British Mission.

<sup>29</sup> "Fate of the Fryers" by Bessie "Bess" Show. 1973. Privately Published. Pg. 6. Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols, February 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Page 8.

<sup>31</sup> Two pages of notes in the handwriting of Richard Fryer, with the signature of John Thomas Geary on the top of page 1. The original notes are in the possession of Vernetta Page Marshall of Charlottesville, Virginia as of April 2010. Vernetta Page Marshall is the daughter of John Geary Page, the grandson of Sophia Fryer Geary. Digital images of these notes are in the possession of Kaye Page Nichols as of April 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Page 22.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. Page 22.

<sup>34</sup> Copy of Original Letter written by Sophia Fryer Geary to Brigham Young, October 15, 1866. In possession of Kaye Nichols, April 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Letter from "Presidents Office, Gt. Salt Lake City, Novr 13<sup>th</sup>, 1866. Copy in possession of Kaye Nichols, January 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> *Deseret News*, January 2, 1867. BYU Library, D45, Reel 4.

<sup>38</sup> <http://udn.lib.utah.edu/u/?/vedette,21721>

daughters to care for, ranging in age from 14 down to just under age 3. It was a difficult time for Sophia. She was known for her beauty and for her sewing skills. She worked hard at her sewing to make ends meet for her young family. It was necessary for her children to help in providing for the family needs. Her daughters Sophia Ann and Echo worked out of the home to assist in support of their mother and sisters. Sophia Geary eventually married Bishop Joshua Thomas Willis of Toquerville, sometime in 1867. Their first child, William Richard Willis, was born 22 May 1868 and their second child Adina Laura Willis born 17 February 1870. Sophia died in childbirth, along with her infant son, James Willis, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1872.

By this time, Echo was 16 years old, and had been working as a domestic helper, as far away as Nevada. The communities in which she worked were principally mining towns, the majority of the individuals of these communities were not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As yet I have been unable to find any LDS Church records confirming the membership of Echo as having been baptized into the Church. Eventually Echo met and married Kennedy James Hanley<sup>39</sup>, probably around 1880. Her two sons were born in Silver Reef<sup>40</sup>, Washington County, Utah. The older son, Robert Emmet Hanley, was born on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1882<sup>41</sup> and died just a month prior to his mother, in Los Gatos, California<sup>42</sup>. Their youngest son, James Geary Hanley, was born on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1885 and is buried at the Prisidio<sup>43</sup> in San Francisco, California. A start, but no dates for Echo are found. I attempted to get her husband's Death Certificate to see what information it contained. Los Gatos doesn't have his Death Certificate. They suggested that I request a copy through the State of California, rather than the County. This I have done and I am waiting for a copy to arrive from the State of California. The State informed me that it could take 12 to 15 weeks for this to occur. No luck as yet. The Death Certificate was finally received in April 2010<sup>44</sup>. All attempts to locate living relatives have proven fruitless to this point. No probate record of any wills or settlements of their Estates has been found at the time of this writing.

## A Time for Review of Existing Documents

At this time I felt that it was necessary to go back through my papers and search for clues among my present holdings. Have I missed anything? I have been collaborating with Andrea Conley on this problem for some time. She being aware of what I was looking for, she sent to me previously an image of page 2 of some handwritten notes which she had among her materials. I studied it and could hardly believe my eyes as to what I was reading. Andrea had sent me a packet of materials some months before, which also

<sup>39</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Idaho, Shoshone County, Kellog Precinct, Enumerated 28<sup>th</sup> day of June 1900, Page 35 A, Line 41.

<sup>40</sup> Certified Copy of Vital Records, State of California, County of Santa Clara. Death Certificate for Echo Geary Hanley. Local Registration No. 37, (478). Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols, December 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Certified Copy of Vital Records, State of California, County of Santa Clara. Death Certificate for Robert Emmett Hanley. Local Registration No. 86 (265). Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols, December 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Certified Copy of Vital Records, State of California, City of San Francisco. Death Certificate for James Geary Hanley. Signed on May 21, 1940. Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols, December 2009.

<sup>44</sup> State of California Department of Public Health, Index No. 21-040559. Death Certificate for Kennedy James Hanley, deceased on 31 October 1921 in Los Gatos, Santa Clara County, California. Copy in possession of Kaye P. Nichols, April 2010.

contained the very image she was now sending to me. To my delight, I read an entry, which was situated on the page right in the middle of a fold of the paper, which separated the entry into two parts, not easily readable at first. The entry read, “*Echo Workman born 9 Decr 1956*”? Wow! Was I reading it correctly? I embarked upon a little manipulation of the image in Adobe Photo Elements©. First I removed the background noise in the image cleaning it up, then cropping it and enlarging it for easier reading. I printed a copy of it, cut the obvious blank portion which was the crease of the fold of the page. From it I pieced them back together. I scanned this image back into the computer which resulted in greater clarity of the entry. It said what I thought it was going to say. Echo Workman Geary indeed is recorded to have been born on 9<sup>th</sup> of December of 1856 from a document which was created in May of 1858. This is just 17 months after the event took place. Right among my own materials I found what I have been searching for since my email to John Eldredge in October of 2009.

It was such a satisfying experience for me to read someone’s hand written notes telling me what I was looking for. Almost immediately questions arose in my mind, “Who wrote the document I was reading?” “In whose possession are the original writings of these notes?” I began my inquisitive quest to know more.

Andrea Conley and her husband had served a mission in Charlottesville, Virginia. Before they departed, I gave Andrea the name and address of another cousin of ours who lived in Charlottesville. Vernetta Page Marshall is the daughter of John Geary Page, a younger brother to my grandfather Robert Geary Page. Since one of my daughters and my son were working in Washington, D.C. for a period of time, my wife and I determined to visit and enjoy our nation’s Capitol. Having visited Vernetta’s brother, Garn Page, in Parowan, Utah, and spending some time with him, he mentioned that his sister had some furniture from Page’s Ranch, the home of our common ancestor, Sophia Ann Geary Page, the sister of Echo Workman Geary. We decided to make contact with Vernetta, and we spent a day visiting with she and her husband. We shared many common stories and folklore from our family.

Before Andrea and her husband returned from their mission in Virginia, they also made contact with Vernetta. In going through some of Vernetta’s papers, Andrea was able to obtain a copy of the two pages of handwritten notes, which have become such an important focus of our research. Vernetta Page Marshall is custodian of these original notes.

The next question which needed an answer concerned the author of the notes. Written on the top of the page is the name “Geary”, followed by the signature of John Thomas Geary. I have several copies of John Thomas’ handwritten signature. There is little doubt that they are the same. My next question then was, “Is John Thomas Geary the author?” After considerable study it is my conclusion that these notes most likely were written by Richard Fryer, the brother to Sophia Fryer Geary. The style of script is definitely of English origin. The notes primarily concerned the genealogy of the Fryer and

Miller families of Yarmouth, Isle of Wight in England. This record concerns the family of Sophia Fryer Geary. On page 2 of the notes is given the births of the children of John Thomas and Sophia. This is a primary source composed originally in May of 1858, with page 2 of the document probably being composed before 1864 or 1865. I am attaching to this Research Report, the notes and signatures report as part of my evidence. (see Appendices A & B)

## Conclusion:

The driving incentive for this Research Report came from the encouragement of John Eldredge, a local historian, whose has a great interest in Echo Canyon and its' history. Since there has been no known recording of a second birth among the emigrating companies of 1856, John wrote to me, "*I think it is important to get this information recorded*"<sup>45</sup>. Not realizing what I was faced with, I undertook the task.

In spite of the frustrations encountered, I persisted in examining many external leads for documented evidence on the life of Echo Workman Geary. They lead me to new contacts with distant relatives, historians, institutions, and multiple published resources. All of these have been interesting and gratifying for me. However, they were inconclusive in identifying the primary focus of my search, the birth date and place of Echo W. Geary.

After a five or six month odyssey, and wondering where I would go next to answer the question, I felt a review of materials which I already had in my possession was warranted. I searched through my files to see if there was a clue which I had missed. Nothing stood out of significance. About the same time that I was going through my materials, I received an email from my cousin, Andrea Conley, who sent to me an image which astounded me. It was an image of a document she had. As I studied it, I found that it was the answer to when and where Echo was born. I went back to my files, and sure enough, the very document that Andrea had sent to me was among my own papers.

**Echo Workman Geary**, the daughter of John Thomas Geary and his wife Sophia Fryer Geary, **was born on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1856 in Echo Canyon**. The Geary family had started their difficult journey in Florence, Nebraska as members of Capt. Andrew J. Siler's Company of Independent Wagons, which had been attached to the Willie Handcart Company. At Ft. Laramie, Nebraska Territory, they separated from the Willie Handcart Company. They then travelled with the Hodgett Wagon Train until they were joined with the rescue party sent by Brigham Young, and were brought into the Great Salt Lake Valley, arriving on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1856. Echo was less than one week old when she, along with her parents and her sister, was rescued from the severe winter conditions of that difficult 1856 winter.

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<sup>45</sup> Email from John Eldredge to Kaye Nichols, Oct. 7, 2009.

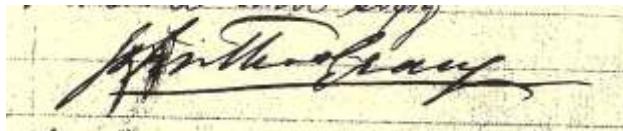
## APPENDIX A

### Signatures of John Thomas Geary compared and analyzed.

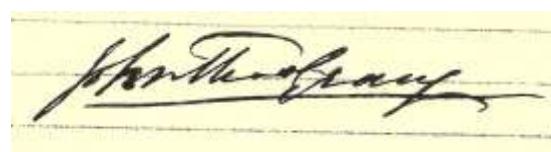
By Kaye P. Nichols, 3.27.2010

- A. Signature of John Thos Geary, from 1<sup>st</sup> Law Suit document.
1. John's signature always is written "John Thos Geary".
  2. In all of the signatures studied, he always underlines his signature, except on his Marriage Document.
  3. There seems to be little change in his style from 1852, when he was married, until the Law Suit was filed in Great Salt Lake City in 1860.
  4. This signature was taken from his signing of the legal document between himself and Mr. Stambaugh, filed on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1860.
  5. John T. Geary was 37 years of age at this time.

- B. Signature of John Thos Geary, cleaned using Adobe Photo Elements®



This signature is the original which has not been enhanced.

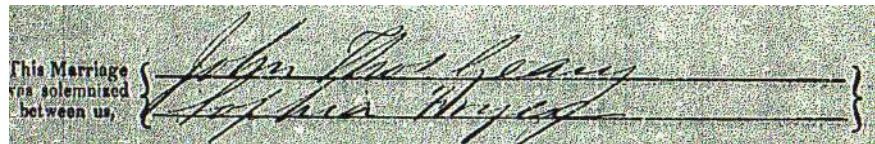


The above signature has been enhanced using Adobe Photo Elements®.

John T. Geary was 37 years of age when this document was signed on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1860 in conjunction with the Law Suit, Stambaugh vs J.T. Geary in the Probate Court in G.S.L.C.

- C. Signature from Marriage Certificate. □

These are the signatures of John and Sophia on the day of their marriage in 1852. John was 29 years of age and Sophia 23 years of age.



- E. Signature from page 1 of handwritten notes on the Fryer Genealogy signed by John Thos Geary

This signature of John Thos Geary was found on page 1 of two pages of handwritten notes dealing with the genealogy of the Moses Fryer Family. The top image is the original and the bottom one has been enhanced through Adobe Photo Elements.

My current conclusion is that the document of notes that we have were written by Richard Fryer in May of 1858. Therefore his reciting of the birth of Echo Workman Geary as being "9 Dec<sup>r</sup> 1856" is the correct date.



□

## APPENDIX B – Identification of the birth of Echo Workman Geary, “9 Decr 1856“ from the images of the original notes.

NOTES: These notes are handwritten in English style, with the signature of John Thos Geary appearing at the top of the page. (see signature below)

The contents of the first page of the notes begins with the topic line, “*Genealogy of the family of Moses Fryer so far is at present*

*(May 1858) ascertained*”. This documents the origin of the notes as being in **May of 1858**. This is very close to the time of the event of Echo’s birth.

I believe these notes were authored by Richard Fryer, brother of Sophia Fryer Geary. The Geary’s at this time were living in Salt Lake City in the 14<sup>th</sup> Ward. John being employed as a School Teacher, and at about this time he participated in the events for the mobilization in preparation for the arrival of Johnston’s Army. It is my observation that the hatch markings at the bottom of the first page, have to do with his writing with pen and ink, and the making of the marks was to free the pen tip of excess ink just prior to making his

writings of the records of this genealogy.

See Exhibit 1, pg 15-16.

The second page is to the right. Note the crease or fold of the page leaves the text separated into two parts by the white line.

Sophia born 12 July 1829 married J. T. Geary  
27 Aug 1852 F. They have had the following children  
namely Sophia Ann born 10 June 1853, Thomas Workman  
25 Aug 1855 and died 15 Jan 1856 - echo Workman  
born 9 Dec 1856, Elizabeth  
Leah born and  
Sarah Ann born

Leah died & Ida Biddle born Sept. 8 and died  
and died 14 Nov 1853  
By R. Garrison she has had the following children  
namely Richard Fryer born 19 April 1856 and died 9 Jan 1857.  
Brooklyn W. F. Ado (son) (name) born 20 Feb 1858  
Sophia born 12 July or August 1829 married J. T. Geary  
27 Aug 1852 F. They have had the following children  
namely Sophia Ann born 10 June 1853, Thomas Workman  
25 Aug 1855 and died 15 Jan 1856 - echo Workman  
born 9 Dec 1856, Elizabeth  
Leah born and  
Sarah Ann born  
George Dick was born 12 July 1832 & married a  
person unknown  
Leah born 31 March 1835 married Edmund Foy  
by whom she had 2 children whose names are  
unknown the oldest is dead -  
Ruth born 1837 married  
the following children namely  
John 1846 - died -  
Sarah 1848

Sophia born 12 July 1829 married J. T. Geary  
27 Aug 1852 F. They have had the following children  
namely Sophia Ann born 10 June 1853, Thomas Workman  
25 Aug 1855 and died 15 Jan 1856 - echo Workman  
born 9 Dec 1856, Elizabeth  
Leah born and  
Sarah Ann born

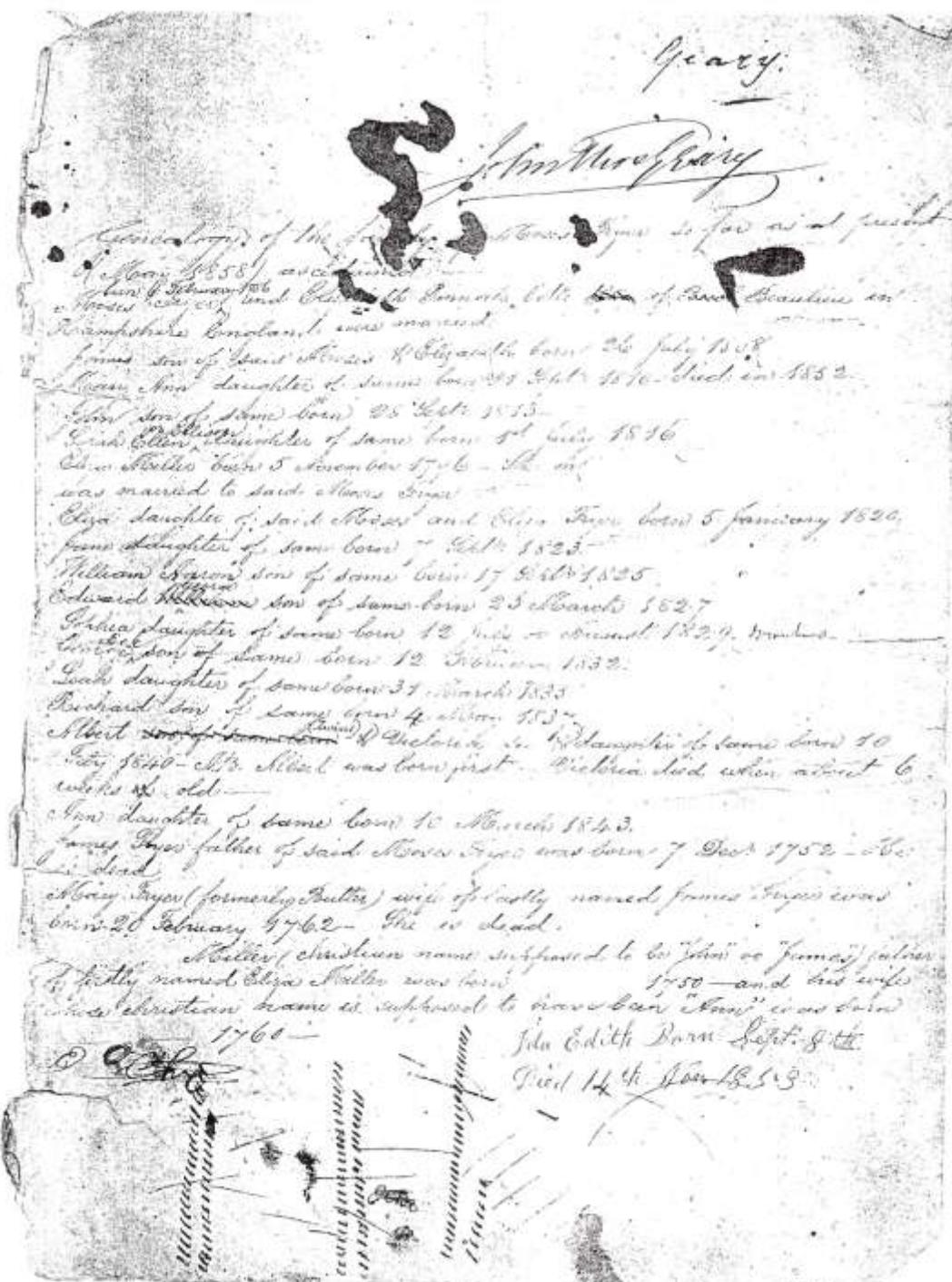
The image to the left can now be easily read as “*Echo Workman born 9 Decr 1856*”.

This documents the birth of Echo as being very close to the timeline which the Church and independent historians have given to me as the most likely time for the Hodgett Wagon Rescue party to have been at Echo Canyon. I am satisfied with the result!

Kaye Page Nichols April of 2010

## Exhibit 1

Page 1



The original notes are in possession of Vernetta Page Marshall, Charlottesville, VA. as of April 2010. Vernetta's father, John Geary Page, is a nephew to Echo Workman Geary Hanley.

both since dead & Ida Edith born Sept. 8 and died  
and died 14 Nov 1853 —

By R. Harrison she has had the following Children  
namely Richard Fryer born 19 April 1850 & died 9 Jan'y 1857.  
Braham W<sup>m</sup> & Ad<sup>e</sup> Jane (Fryer) born 20 Feb 1858.

Sophia born 12 July or August 1829 married J. T. Gray  
24 Aug. 1852 F. - They have had the following children  
namely <sup>Maria</sup> Sophia Ann born 10 June 1853, The Fryer born  
25 Aug. 1855 and died 15 Jan'y 1856 - Lucia Workman  
born 9 Dec. 1856, Lydia Ladd

Leah born

and

Sarah Ann born

George Nick was born 12 July 1832 & married a  
person unknown

Leah born 31 March 1835 married Emanuel Frys  
by whom she had 2 Children whose names are  
unknown.— The oldest is dead.—

Richard born 14 May 1837 married

by whom he has had the following children namely

Albert & Victoria born 10 Feb 1846 - Vic. dead -  
Ann born 10 March 1843

Chun from 10 March 1843.

Augenarzt H. von Jena (Leipzig) vom 20. VIII. 1858.

Sophia born 12 July or Aug<sup>ust</sup> 1829 married J. T. Gray  
27 Aug. 1852 F. - They have 11 the following children  
namely, <sup>now</sup> Sophia Ann born 10 June 1853, Thos Fryer born  
25 Aug<sup>ust</sup> 1855 and died 15 Jan<sup>uary</sup> 1856 - Echo Workman  
born 9 Dec<sup>r</sup> 1856, Lydia born -

Leak barn

Anob

Sarah Ann born