

LIFE OF BRIDGET MARY ELLEN GALLAGHER COTTAM
MATERIAL GATHERED BY DAUGHTER MARGARET COTTAM ARBON AND REWRITTEN BY
GRANDDAUGHTER MABEL ELLEN COTTAM ELLIS - DECEMBER 18, 1980

Very few of our Pioneers have had a more eventful life than BRIDGET MARY ELLEN GALLAGHER COTTAM. Strong in character from a small child, she passed through direct poverty, sickness, loneliness, danger and sacrifice. She had faith in herself, as well as great faith in God. She was born 22 December 1829 in Prescot, England, and died 11 June 1902 in Snowville, Box Elder County, Utah.

Her father, JOHN GALLAGHER (born in 1810 in Luthford, Ireland, and died in 1847), loved her mother, ELLEN DUFFEY (born in 1815 in Mayo, Mayo, Ireland, and died 10 April 1877), enough to lose both fortune and title for her. As a young girl Ellen Duffey was employed as a maid in the home of the Gallaghers, who were wealthy and lived in a beautiful mansion. When the son John came home to Dublin and saw this beautiful Irish girl, he fell in love with her. After a time he persuaded her to marry him secretly, which an impulsive Irish boy would be most apt to do. He loved her and he could not imagine his parents resisting her charms for long. In this he was mistaken, for when they discovered the fact of the secret marriage, as they did when Ellen was not able to continue as a maid because of her health, they wanted him to desert her. This he firmly refused to do and he was made a stranger to his parents. Some wealthy relatives of her mother's, who were very kind of heart, took them in and made them welcome. They remained with them until a little daughter was born in 1829, MARY ELLEN GALLAGHER, the subject of this story.

After a time, they and a company of others seeking new opportunities, made their way to England, where there were better advantages in making a living. During an epidemic of cholera, her father John died, leaving his young wife Ellen and four children, who had been

born in the meantime, Mary Ellen, James, Thomas, and Hanna (or Ann). Alone in the world with no one to help her, life was very hard for Ellen and she remarried, hoping to better her condition and find companionship. Ellen's second husband was a tailor, Thomas Jenkins, who was by nature selfish and disagreeable. As soon as the little children could wind a bobbin, they were forced from home by the stepfather. Mary Ellen earned a penny a day doing this work for two years.

After seven years, her spirit rebelled at this cruel man's way, and she left home and acted as a nurse maid in a private home. She finally went back to the factory where linen was made, and here her brother James found her. She was determined that she would stay hidden from her stepfather. She had not seen her people for several years, living only a short distance away. When she and her brother James met, they ran into each others arms crying for joy. James tried to persuade her to return home, but she never went back again. However, she did meet her mother secretly.

In her early teens, a white swelling came on her knee. The manager of the factory where she worked was very kind to her and arranged to send her to the Manchester Hospital, where she received splendid treatment. When she recovered there was no home to return to, but she was invited to the fine home of the manager. However, Mary Ellen was very independent, and she applied for a position at the hospital, so she could pay for her treatment there. Providence must have guided her, for she was placed in the maternity room, carrying babies back and forth from their mothers to the nursery where they slept. She learned much and was soon advanced. She worked there for two years, learning a great deal about babies and helping deliver many babies. In her life this proved a great blessing, because later in her life she delivered many babies as a midwife and never lost a mother or baby.

Before entering the hospital, she met William Cottam, in Lancashire, England, but they lost track of each other for awhile. She left the work in the hospital and went to work

as a maid in the big mansion of the JAMES COTTAM family, who were wealthy. Because she was a house maid in this elegant home, she was called BRIDGET MARY ELLEN (Bridget was the name given maids). This name remained with her the remainder of her life.

Bridget Mary Ellen's future husband was WILLIAM COTTAM (born 17 March 1829 in Lancashire, England, and died 31 August 1910 in Snowville, Box Elder County, Utah). He was the son of JAMES COTTAM and MARGARET McDONALD COTTAM. William's parents were wealthy and were able to send their son, William, to a mining engineering university in England, where he learned to supervise mining operations. William made several trips from his school back to his home where Bridget Mary Ellen worked, and he fell in love with her. In England, where he was going to school, the Latter-day Saint missionaries would go to the universities and discuss the new LDS religion in America with the university students. William was very interested in the new religion and he was baptized into the Latter-day Saint religion. His parents were devout members of the Church of England. When he returned home he did not tell his family that he had joined the LDS Church. Bridget Mary Ellen Gallagher was a devout Catholic. It was sometime before William and Bridget Mary Ellen became engaged, because he had joined the LDS Church. He finally told Bridget Mary Ellen he had joined the LDS Church, but not his family. As soon as Bridget Mary Ellen heard of the new religion, she believed it immediately, and she was baptised before they were married.

When they told the James Cottam family that they were to be married, and of their baptism into the LDS Church, they were disowned. After they were married, they joined a group of converts under the direction of the Mormon Elders, and moved to Ashton, Lancashire, England, where William worked as an engineer in the coal mines.

Their Family is listed here:

	<u>Birth Date</u>	<u>Birth Place</u>
William Cottam Died 31 Aug. 1910 at Snowville, Box Elder, Utah	17 Mar 1829	Govern, Lancashire, England
Bridget Mary Ellen Gallagher Died 11 June 1902 at Snowville, Box Elder, Utah	22 Dec 1831	Wigan, Lancashire, England
William and Bridget Mary Ellen were married 05 Sept. 1852. Wife: Variations in spelling of maiden name: Galaguir from marriage certificate; Galagier from Family Bible.		
Eliza Cottam Died: 01 April 1854	About 1851	Ashton, Lancashire, England
Thomas Cottam (Twin)	About 1853	Ashton, Lancashire, England
Samuel Cottam (Twin) Died: Within 24 hours of birth	About 1853	Ashton, Lancashire, England
Peter Cottam Died: Within 6 hours of birth	About 1854	Ashton, Lancashire, England
James Moroni Cottam Married: Marie Nelson on 01 Dec. 1881 Died: 06 Sept. 1934	03 Mar 1856	Sunderland, Durham, England
Hannah Cottam Died: About 1859	About 1859	Sunderland, Durham, England
John Cottam (Triplet) Married: Lillie Rose Wade on 02 July 1891 at Logan, Cache County, Utah Died: 16 Oct. 1929 at Garland, Box Elder County, Utah. Buried: Ben Lomond Cemetery at North Ogden, Weber County, Utah.	05 Aug 1861	Ryhope, Durham, England
George Cottam (Triplet)	05 Aug 1861	Ryhope, Durham, England
Betsey Cottam (Triplet) Both Triplets died: 28 Aug 1861 at Ryhope, Durham, England	05 Aug 1861	Ryhope, Durham, England
Margaret Cottam Married: Philip Arbon on 22 Dec. 1881 Died: 29 Oct. 1939	06 Aug 1863	Osborn, Lancashire, England
Ann Ellen (Nellie) Cottam Married: Charles Allen on 16 Mar. 1886 Died: 05 Oct. 1936 at Ogden, Weber County, Utah	05 Dec. 1865	Wigganlane, Lancashire, England
William Cottam, Junior Married: Harriet Maria Neal on 20 Sept. 1882 Died: 03 June 1925	26 Mar. 1869	Beaver Meadows, Beaver County, Pennsylvania
Elizabeth Jane (Lizzie) Cottam Married: Lars Peter Jensen on 26 Oct. 1886 Died: 31 May 1961 at Ogden, Weber County, Utah.	06 Aug. 1870	West Porterville, Morgan County, Utah
Mary Cottam (Twin) Married: David G. Nelson on 20 Sept. 1882 Died: 17 June 1938	10 April 1873	West Porterville, Morgan County, Utah
Martha Cottam (Twin) Married: Christian Peterson on 02 July 1891 Died: 05 Oct. 1960	10 April 1873	West Porterville, Morgan County, Utah
Eve May Cottam Married: Lawrence A. Parker on 07 Feb. 1899 Died: 18 Jan. 1909	12 Nov. 1875	West Porterville, Morgan County, Utah

Eliza, their firstborn, was a beautiful Irish child. She was **drowned** at the age of three, which was a tragedy for William and Bridget Mary Ellen. **Following** the deaths of Thomas and Samuel, twins, and their fourth child, Peter, shortly **after** they were born, the fifth child, James Moroni, was a strong and healthy baby.

Bridget Mary Ellen continued to work as a nurse and also set up her first sales place for groceries and supplies on the porch of their home. She and her **son**, James, would walk at least five miles each trip, carrying the flour, wheat, molasses, **etc.**, to supply her small store. Their sixth child, Hannah, also died at birth. Losing five of their first six children was a heavy burden for the young couple to bear.

Shortly thereafter Bridget Mary Ellen became very ill, not **realizing** that she was to give birth to triplets. The triplets, John, George and Betsey were **born**. However, George and Betsey died two weeks later. John was the smallest of the three, yet he survived. John, later in life, married Lillie Rose Wade on July 2, 1891, and they **were** the parents of three daughters and one son. Josephine was born May 6, 1892, and **died** May 15, 1951. I (Mabel Ellen) was born 25 October 1893, John Andrew was born 27 Nov. **1896** and died December 1, 1896, and Lillie Mozella was born 24 July 1902 and died 17 May **1915**. John died 16 Oct. 1929, in Garland, Box Elder County, Utah, and Lillie, my mother, died 15 Feb. 1928 in Ogden, Weber County, Utah. They are both buried in the Ben **Lamond** Cemetery, North Ogden, Weber County, Utah.

Following the birth of their tenth child, Margaret, the **family** was anxious to go to America as converts to the Church, and where William would get **much** better wages as an engineer in the Pennsylvania coal mines. They seemed unable to **get** enough means together, and the years passed. In approximately 1865 William joined a group of converts under the direction of the Elders and went to the United States, since it was decided that he should go first, and work to send for his wife and family later. He left for **America** with a heavy heart, as he left behind him the graves of seven of his young children.

In order to earn money while William was in America, Bridget Mary Ellen set up her second small store and also worked in the hospital. While the Mother was away, her daughter, Margaret, looked after both James and John.

Their daughter, Ann Ellen (Nellie) was born 05 Dec. 1865, seven months after her husband left for America, and this was kept secret from him as a *surprise*. When the child was nine days old, Bridget Mary Ellen and her four small children left on the voyage across the ocean. During all this time, she was bitterly opposed by her mother, who was a devout Catholic, and her mother thought that Bridget Mary Ellen would surely become one of Brigham Young's wives. She told Bridget Mary Ellen, "I would rather poison you than have you go to Utah." At the boat when she came to see her off, she said, "I would rather push you into the ocean than see you go to Brigham Young." She tried to comfort her mother and told her that she was going to Pennsylvania to her husband. She was six weeks on the boat. A terrible storm came up while they were on the ocean, and it was so bad that they were tossed about in such a manner that the Captain, the First Mate, and some of the others were washed overboard and drowned. For three weeks or more their clothing was wet and their food soaked. She tried to keep the tiny baby's clothes dry by keeping them wrapped around herself. Her oldest boy, James, would say, "Cover us up, Ma, so we won't see ourselves drown." With the exception of brave faithful Bridget May Ellen, all on board expected to drown, but she continued to pray amid cries and groans. They all wondered at her calm, and she told them of her faith and belief, and that she had been promised she would arrive safely. They gathered about her, seeming to receive consolation and faith from her.

She landed in New York on New Year's Day in the year 1866. Her husband had been to meet her many times, but could find out nothing about the ship. The shipping people were sure the boat had sunk, but he continued to meet every ship as it came in, because he had been promised that

his family would be safe. He only expected to see her and three children, but when she and the four children arrived, they cried for joy at being together again. He was especially happy about the new one about which he didn't know anything.

He continued working in the mines in Pennsylvania until he was sorely afflicted with boils, 17 of them on one arm, which made it impossible to work at that time. That part of the country was invaded by a band of lawless men called "The White Caps." They would entice people from their homes under false pretenses and mistreat and kill them. One night a man came to ask Bridget Mary Ellen to assist his wife in childbirth. Among her gifts was the spirit of discernment, and she felt he was an evil man. They talked a few minutes and she turned in the house as though to prepare herself to go with him, and, picking up a pistol, shot in the air several times. He left very quickly and she found out later he was a member of this band.

Their resources were very low and she resolved to sell her hair, which was very abundant. Mabel remembers her Grandmother telling that the braid of her hair was thick as her wrist and coal black. She offered to sell it for \$40.00 to Mr. Blackburn, the foreman of the mine where her husband worked, but when he noticed her swollen eyes, he asked her why. She said they were without food. He told her he would give her the money, but she was to keep the hair on her head and take care of it. As soon as she was able to she paid him back.

Her son, James, went to work with his father in the mines as soon as the boils were better. Bridget Mary Ellen took in boarders, besides practicing her profession as a midwife. Their son, WILLIAM, was born March 26, 1869, in Beaver Meadows, Beaver County, Pennsylvania. He was later married to Harriet Maria Neal on September 20, 1882. William was a tiny baby as they traveled to Utah in open cattle cars on the first train into Utah.

The family soon made enough money to come to Utah. The Elders told her to bring clothes, shoes and all the supplies they could, instead of money. They came on the first freight train that brought cattle, mail and passengers to Utah. There were no extra men to relieve the

crew, and when they reached a station at nightfall, the engineer, fireman, brakeman and conductor rolled up in their blankets in the station house and slept until morning. The family had to sleep in the open freight cars with the other passengers.

They arrived in Morgan, Utah, on October 6, 1869. They were met at the train by Brother Thomas Deardon and friends. They settled in Porterville, three miles west of Morgan. Bridget Mary Ellen loved Porterville because of the beautiful river, trees and meadow lands. They lived in a house with a dirt floor, quilts were used for doors and burlap bags at the windows. They were the first people in Porterville to have a stove and a lamp, which Bridget bought in Ogden. She traded a revolver and a suit of clothes for them. Being a miner, William was very anxious to settle in Eureka, Utah, or Wyoming, but his wife was determined to raise her children in a better environment. William went to Eureka, Utah, to work, and came home at intervals. While he was away, she acquired a farm. It was a very happy surprise for William when he found them all settled on "an honest to goodness farm," as his daughter, Margaret, expressed it.

How thankful Bridget Mary Ellen was for her experience in the hospital in England. She earned many dollars working as a midwife to help pay for the new farm. Part of this farm was a large meadow five miles up the canyon, where she went to help her oldest son, James, pitch hay. While there they heard a plaintive sound and remembered hearing that the panther's call was described as such, and decided they were about to be attacked by one. They urged the slow oxen to greater speed and when they arrived home they did not have a spear of hay left on the wagon. They had come so fast they had lost it all. She often took the children to pick up potatoes for the winter. She white-washed the school house, which was also used as a church and town hall.

Their last four children were born in Porterville, Morgan County, Utah: Elizabeth Jane, born August 6, 1879 and died May 31, 1961, was married to Lars Peter Jensen; twins Mary and Martha were born April 10, 1873. Mary was married to David G. Nelson and died June 17, 1938.

Martha was married to Christian Peterson and died October 5, 1960. The last daughter, Eve May, was born November 12, 1875, married Lawrence A. Parker on February 7, 1899, and died January 18, 1909.

William and Bridget Mary Ellen Cottam received their endowments in the Endowment House, Salt Lake City, on January 27, 1873. As they traveled to the Endowment House in Salt Lake from Porterville, Utah, the weather was very cold and stormy. They traveled in a lumber wagon without a spring seat. The wagon was drawn by oxen. The roads were very bad, and they walked for two miles through Devils Gate in Weber Canyon through deep snow. They were very anxious to go to the Endowment House at this time, as Bridget Mary Ellen was expecting another baby very soon. Elder Daniel H. Wells performed the ceremony, and he called Bridget Mary Ellen back and gave her a second blessing, saying it was a very rare thing to see an Irish Catholic converted to the faith and having her endowments. Twin girls, Mary and Martha, were born to them after they arrived home. After experiencing the hard trip, the birth of the twin girls was indeed a blessing. At this time a very dear friend had lost her baby and asked Bridget Mary Ellen to give her one of the twins, thinking that one baby would be all she could provide for in those hard times, but Bridget Mary Ellen knew that the Lord would provide.

In two more years she gave birth to a baby girl, Eve May. The snow was two feet deep and it was a bitterly cold day on November 12, 1875. There were no near neighbors to help her, and only an oxen team with which to go for help. Bridget Mary Ellen felt she did not want to be left alone long enough for anyone to go out in the bitter cold weather to find help. The baby was born with only the help of her husband. They said they felt so much like they imagined Adam and Eve felt that they named the little girl, Eve May. Eve lived until she was 34 years old and had a family of our children. She and her husband, Lawrence A. Parker, went as pioneers to Big Horn, Wyoming, the first white woman there.

While living in Porterville, Bridget Mary Ellen took in washing and did everything possible to help support the family. The children's clothes and shoes were so shabby that she felt ashamed to send them to Sunday School, and at times felt very discouraged. She called at the home of Henry Bowering, a Patriarch of the Church, when a new baby was born there. She received a wonderful blessing at this time and was told that as long as she remained faithful and trusted in the Lord, she would be equal to all occasions. In the practice of mid-wifery for 50 years, in England, Pennsylvania, Porterville and Snowville, Utah, she never lost a mother or a baby. In Porterville, she usually went to the patients on horse-back, wading streams, and sometimes riding on the running gears of sleighs. When not able to get a horse, she walked through the snow for miles. The night was never too dark nor the way too far for her to go when she was needed. They would put hot rocks in the sleighs to keep from freezing, but she never refused to go. She seemed to bring an atmosphere of faith and hope with her. She also treated contagious diseases. It seemed a gift with her to nurse the ill. She did not know how to read a thermometer. In fact, she could neither read nor write. She usually charged \$3.00 for the whole confinement or illness, and if the people were in poor circumstances, she returned the money to them.

While living in Porterville, Utah, they heard some encouraging remarks of the Promontory Point country in Box Elder County, Utah. William and his oldest son went to Curlew Valley with a company of other settlers and took a plot of land, spending the Winter plowing. In the Spring they returned and the parents considered the advisability of taking their families to Curlew Valley where there were no schools, churches or organizations of any kind, and very few people. They felt it was not wise to make the move at this time. Previously to this, William had taken up a homestead in West Point, Utah, and the Cottam family decided to move there, When they were preparing to move, he found out that he had waited too long and had lost his homestead rights. Someone else had taken them.

William had sold the home in Porterville, so there remained nothing else to do but move to Curlew Valley. They packed up and started with two head of cattle, two oxen, two horses and a wagon. The family was very proud of the wagon, as it had a spring seat and was drawn by a span of horses. The journey took eight days, as they had to travel very slowly. The same distance is traveled in five or six hours by automobile today. The year was 1877.

One night they camped in Corinne, Utah, and Bridget Mary Ellen would not let the children get very far away from her, for fear she would lose them in the tall wheat grass. They arrived at their new home the first of May. Their new log house in Curlew Valley had neither floors, doors or windows, and the stock wandered all over at random. Three of the children got lost and Bridget Mary Ellen sent three of the other children to find them. She worried so much before they finally got back that she was delirious when they told her the children were all right. When she was improving, she determined to think more of her blessings and less of her own hardships. She thought, as she lay in her bed, of how the Lord had helped them in their troubles. She felt that in their new world He would open the way for them out of every difficulty, and give her strength and knowledge to help her husband and others in distress, and she felt that in this new world He would open the way for them. Great faith had been exercised for her by the family and the Elders. A Danish neighbor by the name of Hansen would come and administer to her in the Danish language. She always felt the spirit of the Lord when Brother Hansen came. She began to be her own self, full of hope again, and always looking for opportunities to help others.

After moving to Curlew Valley, it was a complete new life for William, as there were no mines and he had never farmed.

William and his oldest son, James, cut cedar posts and hauled them 60 miles to sell, and through this enterprise provided for his family. As soon as they were able, they stocked a store in Snowville with 2,000 pounds of flour and three barrels of syrup, which sold very

quickly. They later bought out the co-op store. They were very thrifty and soon had a better house. It was a two-room log house. Bridget Mary Ellen was now able to practice her profession as a mid-wife. She often traveled 25 or 30 miles to her patients. William got the contract to carry mail to Kelton, Utah, twice a week. Later he freighted from Kelton to Hailey, Wood River County, Idaho.

The Cottam family had never been able to help bring any of their relatives to this country, and now they felt they could do so. They sent money for William's oldest brother, Thomas. They also sent for Bridget Mary Ellen's oldest brother, James, but he died before the money reached England.

Their oldest daughter, Margaret, having had the advantages of some schooling, started teaching school, and among her pupils were many older than herself. The school house was built near the foothills and a mile from their home. The coyotes and wild cattle made her very uneasy. In fact she would wait until the young men came to open the school house. Her little brothers and sisters and the neighbor children attended. There was no money for this labor, but she received cedar posts, meat and flour.

The following Summer the Snowville Ward was organized and all the family became active members. Bridget Mary Ellen was a Relief Society teacher, something for which she was particularly fitted. Margaret was Secretary of the Mutual. Bridget Mary Ellen's visiting teacher companion was Ellen Goodliff, a deaf lady who used a horn. Aunt Ellen, as the children called her, would come and have lunch with the family before they left to do their teaching. They would always kneel in prayer with the family. Bridget Mary Ellen and Ellen Goodliff could not talk together without shouting, so they would counsel together before leaving the house or outside on the creek bank.

A very wealthy man, Richard Crocker, who had 14,000 head of cattle, came to Snowville. A Mr. Lamgan owned 1,500 head of cattle and Mr. Crocker wanted to buy them. Since Mr. Lamgan knew Mr. Crocker was wealthy, he asked a great deal more than the cattle was

worth. William was asked to act as agent for Mr. Crocker. He bought the cattle from Mr. Lamgan at a fair price and was paid \$500 for his services, which looked like a fortune to William and Bridget Mary Ellen. Mr. Crocker owned a large interest in the railroad and was in a position to help anyone in whom he had confidence. He planned to have the ground fenced and gave William the contract. This was a large undertaking for William, but it brought work for many men and was a great help to the Curlew Valley at this time. William and Bridget Mary Ellen also had a large salt contract. She also ran the store and cooked for some men, while he managed the salt business. They were always trying to get ahead, and at the same time helping others.

Store-keeping seemed to be one of Bridget Mary Ellen's vocations. She could neither read nor write, but she kept track of everything anyone bought, along with prices, in her head. She had a system of her own keeping the money straight by using whole, half, or fourth circles. She had a wonderful memory. When she came to Ogden for a bill of goods from Scowcrofts, having known them in England, she never used a note, she just relied on her memory. Snowville by this time was much more active than it is today. They used to buy hides, pelts and pine nuts from the Indians in the Spring of the year.

At one time she and two of her daughters were alone at the store. All the men were away working on the farm, and a band of Indians came loaded with wool and hides to trade. She bought their hides and wool, and gave them the money as was the custom, and they, in turn, paid money for provisions. Store goods of all kinds, including calico, were kept on hand for the Indians, they having the preference. At this time there was an article the Indians wanted, which she did not have, so they went to the other store owned by the Bishop. They were angry with her, so they came back and took what wool they wanted, and she was helpless to do anything.

Connected to the Cottam store was a hotel where they met people of all kinds who remembered the Cottam's for their honesty. At one time a discouraged fruit peddler brought a

load of fruit to Snowville, only to find that three peddler had preceded him and his fruit was selling so slowly it became overripe, and Bridget Mary Ellen wanted to help him if she could. She had a load of empty soda water bottles, which he would have no trouble selling and which would meet his expenses. She took the overripe fruit off his hands and risked getting rid of it. He was a poor man and could not afford to lose this money. Later he said he blssed the day he met her.

She was very thoughtful and generous. At one time the town was sending a delegate to a convention, but no one seemed to think he needed money to pay his expenses, so she gave him \$10 to help.

At one time in England her brother-in-law came to work in the mines and needed a lamp to wear on his hat as the miners used, but had no money to buy it, and neither did she. She pawned her petticoat for the money and bought it. Another time a convert from England wanted to go to the Temple, but did not have the clothes, so she helped her get them.

Before leaving Porterville, she presented the Church with a pretty red and black tablecloth for their pulpit. This was in 1871 and they used it until 1908, when they rebuilt.

One of the sorrows in her life was the death of her little three year old daughter, Eliza, who was drowned in England. She was moving and gave the child a piece of bread and butter, and went on working, thinking her Grandmother Cottam was watching her. They found her about midnight, at the bottom of the stairs, lying with her face in the soft mud and water which was in the cellar, with the piece of bread still in her hand. This occurred just before her son James was born.

While this trouble and other things were happening to this couple, along with all their trials, they remained true to the faith. Their children went to the Logan Temple with them and were sealed to them. They were always united, and when she was nursing and within walking distance, her husband would come to see her and unite his faith with hers. Faith was needed, for many times there were difficult births to cope with. She always had

her patient administered to and she felt that everything would be all right.

When the laws of the State of Utah required a midwife to have a certificate from some school of training, hundreds of letters were sent to Salt Lake City to the people in charge petitioning them to allow Bridget Mary Ellen Cottam to practice, and testifying of her great ability. When she became too old to practice, she would take her oldest daughter, Margaret, along to do the work and she would direct her what to do. She paid for the training of Margaret in midwifery.

Bridget Mary Ellen Cottam's picture hangs in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum in Salt Lake City, honoring her as one of the outstanding midwives in the early history of Utah, together with the picture of her daughter, Margaret Cottam Arbon.

One of her patients, Mrs. Maria Neal, moved to Salt Lake City from Stone, Idaho. She had a large family. Mr. Neal would desert his family each time she had a child, and Bridget Mary Ellen would take care of the new baby and the entire family until the father returned. After the Neals moved to Salt Lake City and she was expecting her seventh child, she wanted Bridget Mary Ellen to deliver her baby because she depended upon her. Bridget Mary Ellen drove her covered wagon from Snowville, Utah, to Salt Lake City to take care of Mrs. Neal. When she got there Mrs. Neal and the baby were dead. Bridget Mary Ellen took the six children with her in the covered wagon, together with the supplies she had bought for her store. It rained on them the three days it took to travel from Salt Lake to Snowville. The wagon cover was soaked above the huddled children. She left Alice and Willie Neal with their sister, Ella Neal Cottle, in Plain City, Utah, but she took the other four children home and cared for them. When she came home, her husband William said, "I sent thee for a load of goods, and thee brought back a load of children," but he was as anxious to help them as she was. At this time the Cottam's had nine living children of their own. They later found good homes for three of the Neal children among the Cottam families in Snowville, but they raised one of the boys as their own.

The Cottam family went through many trying times in the new country of Curlew Valley. They were so poor that at times they suffered real hunger. They were so thankful for every blessing. There was so little to eat at times except flour ~~meat~~ or gravy, but they made good and their nine children all married and raised large families.

Bridget Mary Ellen was the only member of her family to join the Church, and only saw one member of her family again, a brother who came to America and settled in Mexico (later New Mexico). He wrote that he was coming to Utah to see her and she sent a team of horses to Ogden to meet him, but he failed to arrive. Later William read of an explosion in the mines where he had worked in Mexico, so she mourned him as dead. The brother was a giant of a man and became a wrestler. Thinking that his sister would think his profession objectionable for a Christian woman, he decided not to come. He traveled in the United States for 20 years, finally married and became the father of several sons. He now longed to see his sister, Bridget Mary Ellen, so he came to Utah and went to the Governor, Governor Wells, who sent him to President Kelly's home in Box Elder Stake. This man entertained him for two days, and before he left President Kelly's home he had a different idea of the Mormons. He went to Snowville with the mailman and posed as a salesman selling bibles. When he approached his sister, she told him she didn't need a bible, as she had plenty, and she could not read the ones she had. He said, "You must have come from Lankershire, England, from your dialect." She replied that she had. He asked, "Did you know certain families there by the name of Duffy or Jenkins?" She told him that she was a relative of those families, and then he asked her about her brother, James. She sadly told him of the mine explosion and that she thought he was dead. He could not resist it any longer, and taking her in his arms ~~told~~ her that he was her brother. She had been kneeling at the stove taking care of her bread. (She was noted for her good bread, all around the country.) Needless to say, her bread was neglected that day.

This brother died leaving a family in New Mexico, where they had ranches. He was a leader, as well as his sister, and at one time had a very important position in the courts. Bridget Mary Ellen's mother died at the age of 90 in Wiggan, England, but she never heard any more from the rest of her family. Her sister, Ann, was born about 1835, and was baptized on 12 Nov. 1895, and endowed and sealed to William Cottam 13 Nov. 1895, as his second wife. She died about 1884. Bridget Mary Ellen had 16 children of her own, including two sets of twins and one set of triplets. Only nine grew to maturity. She lost seven of them as babies in England, which was a hard burden for Bridget Mary Ellen and William to bear.

The store in Snowville was built on the Cottam homestead land, and was in the hands of some members of the Cottam family for a good many years until the present time. They built a beautiful two-room log house in Snowville with an eight-foot high ceiling. It had a summer kitchen attached with a porch, which was made of lumber. In the Winter the Summer kitchen was used as a store-room for supplies. If Bridget Mary Ellen wanted a chicken coop or pig pen, she would build it herself, because William was running the mail from Snowville to Kelton, Idaho, besides cutting cedar posts and getting salt from Salt Lake.

She later gave this home to her son, John, and his wife, Lillie Rose, and their two little girls, Josephine and Mabel Ellen, with 160 acres of land. They took advantage of the opportunity to homestead and dry farm. They gave their son, William and his family, 160 acres on the North of the original home, on which he built a home. They also gave their son, James and his family, 160 acres on the South of the original Cottam home. Bridget Mary Ellen and William moved into the Town of Snowville and built their store on the corner of their 160 acres, which were on the main highway. They bought a large home in Snowville, with two log houses on the back of the lot. One served as a greenhouse for plants, in which she also raised canaries. She would give canaries as birthday gifts to the oldest daughter of

each family, together with a set of earrings for pierced ears. She always gave both Josephine and Mabel Ellen the same gifts.

Bridget Mary Ellen went to Ogden with her daughter-in-law, Lillie Rose Cottam, for supplies in 1902 and took a stroke in the W. H. Wright Department Store (which is now Penney's) in Ogden. There was no hospital at this time, and they put her in a room of the Broom Hotel and Lillie helped care for her. She never recovered her health, and they took her to Snowville on a spring bed in the back of a covered wagon. She lived about six weeks and passed away on 11 June 1902, at the age of 71 years. It was so hard for her good husband and children to part with their wonderful wife and mother, but they were surrounded with loving friends and neighbors, who all had some noble deed to tell of her. William lived 10 years after his wife's passing, living at the homes of his daughters. He was 81 years old and his mind was still alert when he passed on.

Bridget Mary Ellen was buried in linen brought from Ireland by Joseph Scowcroft. The pall bearers were boys she had helped bring into the world. Just a week before she died, the Relief Society held their meeting in her home and she bore a wonderful testimony.

At one time when her daughter, Margaret, met Joseph Scowcroft on the street in Ogden, he spoke of the great likeness between her and her mother. He also told her then what a wonderful mother she had. Margaret answered, "If Mother had of had the advantage of an education, she could have done wonderful things." He replied, "Education, why your Mother was the best educated woman I know. She could have run a railroad, if she had the money."

Bridget Mary Ellen Cottam has not really died, for her memory shall live forever, and keep her descendants striving after the noble and the good, in an effort to make themselves worthy of her and be able to mingle with her and her noble husband, William, in the hereafter.

Four children were born in England who came to America with their Mother -- James, John, Margaret and Ellen (Nellie). William was born in Pennsylvania. Elizabeth, Martha, Mary and Eve May were born in Porterville, Utah. They lost seven children in England -- Eliza, Thomas and Samuel (twins), Peter, Hannah, George and Betsey (two of the set of triplets, of which John surviving triplet).

Written by:

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