Ann Elizabeth (“Betsy”) Parsons Webster and her husband, Francis, were stalwart English converts whose life-long belief in God and His benevolence enabled them to recognize restored truth and be baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At 13 years of age, Betsy cross-stitched a sampler that illustrated her faith that prayer would carry her through the trials of her life:

If you desire to worship God aright  
First in the morning pray and last at night  
Crave for his blessing as your labour all  
And in distress for his assistance call

The Websters, along with other European converts, were encouraged to join with the rest of the Saints in Utah. Betsy and her husband had the means to travel to Zion in comfort and ease, but at the counsel of the prophet shared of their abundance so 9 more people could afford to make the journey (see the account of Francis Webster for more detail). This meant that Betsy, through the most uncomfortable part of her expectant condition, would have to walk with the handcart companies instead of riding in comfort in a wagon. Betsy’s mother and step-father, William and Amy Parsons Middleton, and her 15 year-old brother John were also in the company.

Three weeks before the winter storms set in, on September 27, 1856, Betsy’s baby girl Amy Elizabeth was born near Wolf Creek on the Platt River. Still recovering from giving birth on the plains, Betsy and her family carried the newborn through the ice and snow and arrived alive in Salt Lake City on November 30. Amy Elizabeth wrote later of their experience:

“Grandfather Middleton drove one of the provisions wagons. I think Grandmother could have rode some of the time, but that she walked to keep Mother company, and to help carry me, the latter part of the journey, I have no doubt.

“They were living on a quarter of a lb. of flour a day each. Father had lived for 5 days on dead Buffalo meat without salt, when they were met by the relief train. Father had done that so grandmother and mother could have his quarter lb. of flour.”

After arriving in Salt Lake City, Betsy and her family were called to settle in Cedar City where she was known for her determination, industry, education, and creative sewing skills in making-over old clothing into new. Her nephew, Dr. George Middleton, paid fitting tribute to her:

“Aunt Betsy Webster was to me one of the most adorable women I ever knew. She it was who first recognized my struggles as a boy, and came to my aid with a full measure of sympathy…[she had] an education unusual for the times. Her handwriting was superb, and her language was that of the upper class of English…My more mature judgment of her confirms the estimate of my boyhood days that she was the embodiment of all that was dignified, and noble and true in womankind. God bless her sacred memory.”