

Rosa Clara

Rosa Clara: Bravery on the Pacific

by Marjorie B. Newton

When eleven-year-old Rosa Clara Friedlander stepped ashore in bustling Sydney Town, Australia, in March 1849, she had already traveled halfway around the world from her birthplace in the Channel Islands. Before her girlhood was over, she was to sail across the Pacific Ocean to yet another new home in frontier Utah. The years between saw her discover the restored gospel, help pioneer the Sydney Branch, and shoulder adult responsibilities in a way today's Laurel-age girls could scarcely contemplate.

Rosa Clara was born on the island of Guernsey in 1837, but was taken first to England and then to New South Wales, Australia, after her father died. By 1849, when Rosa Clara arrived with her mother, Eliza Friedlander, and younger brother James, Sydney was losing its penal-settlement image and was a large, prosperous city. Two years after their arrival, Rosa Clara's mother married George W. Watson.

Just six weeks after the marriage, Elder John Murdock and Elder Charles W. Wandell arrived to open the Australian Mission of the Church. By Christmas they had baptized a dozen converts, and on the first Sunday of 1852, Elder Wandell organized the Sydney Branch.

Eliza Watson, her husband, and her children accepted the gospel and were all baptized within a few weeks of the branch's organization. Their home was frequently the site of cottage meetings, and when the elders needed someone to move to Melbourne and serve as a part-time missionary there, George Watson volunteered.

Rosa Clara was devastated. At fifteen, she enjoyed working in the little branch and had become close friends with another young member, Mary Clines. Although she loved her mother, Rosa Clara apparently did not get along well with her stepfather. So, with her parents' consent, when the rest of the family sailed for Melbourne, Rosa Clara remained in Sydney under the guardianship of successive mission presidents.

Later, Rosa Clara lived with her friend Mary Clines and Mary's husband, Robert Evans, at Kissing Point on the Parramatta River. Every Sunday she walked twelve miles into the city to attend meetings in the Old Assembly Rooms opposite the law courts in King Street—



rooms that were once a temporary meeting-place for the Presbyterian church.

Rosa Clara attended singing practice on Thursday evenings and sang in the choir on Sundays. She helped distribute tracts and did all she could to further missionary work in Sydney.

On 21 May 1853, sixteen-year-old Rosa Clara Friedlander married Charles Joseph Gordon Logie, a recent convert, in the Scots Church. The Reverend James Fullerton performed the ceremony because Latter-day Saint elders were not recognized marriage celebrants in the colony; but the new mission president, Augustus Farnham, and another of Rosa Clara's Latter-day Saint friends, Mary Ann Gingell, attended the ceremony and signed the register as witnesses. "Attended the wedding of Brother Logie and Sister Rose Friedlander at Parson Fullerton's," wrote President Farnham in his journal. "Returned to Brother Gingell's and married them over again."

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Rosa Clara and Charles Logie set up house and continued their work in the branch. One of the new missionaries, Elder John Hyde, was ill with cancer of the mouth. His health worsened, and the Benevolent Asylum remained his only alternative. Finally, Rosa Clara and Charles arranged for Elder Hyde to be taken from the Asylum to the Logie home, where the courageous sixteen-year-old girl nursed him until his death.

On 27 June 1854, Rosa Clara had her first baby, a little girl, named Annie Augusta after President Farnham. When little Annie Augusta was fourteen months old, the family sailed from Sydney with a company of Saints on the *Julia Ann*, bound for California. Disaster struck four weeks later.

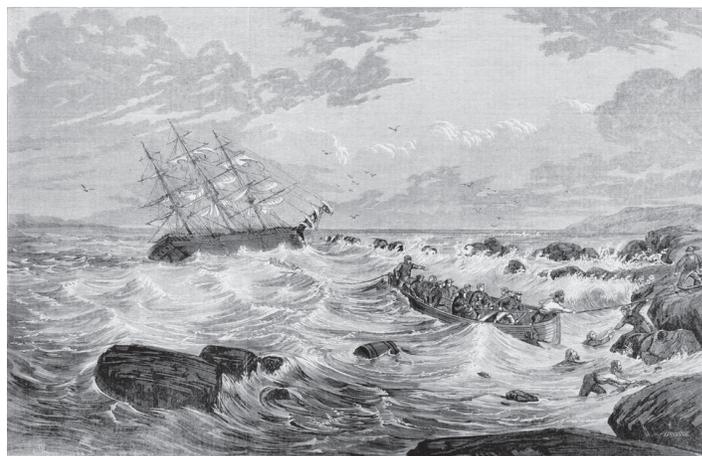
On the evening of 3 October 1855, Rosa Clara put her baby to bed while some of the members sang hymns on top of the midship house. Suddenly the vessel struck a coral reef. Confusion reigned until one of the ship's crew swam to the reef and managed to fasten a rope. The captain prepared to ferry the women and children one at a time to the reef.

No one knew what lay ahead in the pitch-black night. The women were afraid. Finally Rosa Clara, not yet eighteen, volunteered to be the first. Hurriedly, she helped tie baby Ann securely to Charles's back in a brown woolen shawl and readied herself to be taken to the reef. But then, before Rosa Clara's horrified eyes, her husband and baby were swept overboard by the huge seas. One of the sailors rescued them unharmed.

With enormous courage, then, in leaving her family on the wreck, Rosa Clara climbed onto the captain's lap and was pulled, hand over hand, to the reef. Here the captain left her standing barefoot on the sharp coral, chest-deep in the sea, with the surf breaking on the reef. She stayed alone and in darkness while he returned for the other women. Gradually, most of the company, including Charles and baby Ann, arrived safely. But not all were so fortunate. Two little girls were washed off the deck and were lost; two women and a small baby drowned in the cabin.

When daylight arrived, the crew managed to get the passengers from the reef to a small island, which became their home for the next eight weeks.

Food from the ship, as well as coconuts, fish, turtle meat, and eggs, sustained everyone. They formed coco-



nut shells into drinking vessels. With a large silk skirt also salvaged from the wreck, Charles Logie fashioned a tent for Rosa Clara, who was ill. After repairing the ship's boat, some of the crew rowed two hundred miles to the Society Islands (Tahiti) for help.

The Logie family and others were taken off the island two months after the wreck, finally arriving in San Francisco. There, Elder George Q. Cannon presented Rosa Clara with a small pewter teapot in recognition of her bravery in being the first to go to the reef. The teapot is a treasured family heirloom today, together with a carved coconut-shell drinking vessel and a handmade nail from the *Julia Ann*.

Charles and Rosa Clara Logie eventually settled in American Fork, Utah, where Rosa Clara reared twelve children. But although she served the Lord to the end of her days, the service she gave as a young girl in the first Sydney Branch of the Church has not been forgotten. "There are several large and flourishing Colonies [in Australia] each containing many thousands of British inhabitants," wrote Charles Wandell to Franklin D. Richards in 1852, "and the little branch in Sydney is the nucleus of the Kingdom which must spread through them all."

Today, more than seventy thousand Australian members in eighteen stakes and five missions are a lasting memorial to the pioneer spirit of missionaries like Charles W. Wandell and stalwart members like Rosa Clara Friedlander Logie.

Source: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1990/08/rosa-clara-bravery-on-the-pacific?lang=eng>