



*Suzette  
Stalé  
Cardon  
1837-1923*

*Compiled by  
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## SUZETTE STALÉ CARDON

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MARTHE SUSANNE STALÉ CARDON - KNOWN AS SUZETTE STALÉ CARDON

Stalwart Pioneer, Valiant, Exemplary Daughter of God  
Daughter of Jean Pierre Stalé and Jeanne Marie Gaudin-Moise  
Wife of Louis Philip Cardon  
Mother of Joseph Samuel, Emanuel Philip, Mary Catherine, Louis Paul  
and Isabella Susette Cardon

Suzette Stalé was born February 12, 1837, in Angrogna, Torino, Italy. She was the first child of Jeanne Marie Gaudin-Moise and Jean Pierre Stalé. Pierre had been married twice before marrying Jeanne Marie. Each of his other wives had died shortly after giving birth to her first child.

Pierre and his family lived on their farm in Angrogna. During the mid 1840's a disease killed his sheep and at about the same time a blight destroyed his grape vines. They had to sell their farm and move to Prarustin, to a smaller and less productive farm. At this time the Stalés were friends of the Cardons. They joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1853, about a year after the Cardon family became members.

In February of 1854 the first group of Waldensian converts left their homeland to emigrate to America. Philippe Cardon had been able to sell the family home and property so his was one of the few families that could pay its own way. Pierre Stalé was not so fortunate and had to try to save money for the trip. By 1855, the family was only able to save enough for one person to make the trip. They had decided to have Suzette go with her cousin Susanne Gaudin. About this time, Franklin D. Richards and two other missionaries were hiding from a mob in the high mountain passes near Prarustin. They had been without food for three days the morning they arrived at the Stalé home. Suzette Stalé, seventeen, ran out and milked the goats while her mother prepared a meal for the elders. Later, as President Richards was overseeing the use of the Perpetual Emigration Funds, he sent word to the Elders in Prarustin to be sure the entire family of "the girl who milked the goats" was brought out to go to America.

Pierre and Jeanne Marie Stalé's family, including their four children, sailed on the John T. Boyd which took sixty-six days to cross the Atlantic because of the winter weather. The Cardon and

Malan groups took 35 and 48 days respectively to cross. By the time it reached America, the ship the Stalé group sailed on had almost exhausted the water supply it carried. The Stalés arrived in New York City and went to Iowa by rail. They came west with the First Handcart company known as the Edmund Ellsworth Handcart Company, which left Iowa City, Iowa, on June 9, 1856.

The Stalés experienced some of the same problems in communicating with others that the two prior groups of Vaudois saints had in the wagon trains. One of the biggest challenges the handcart companies had was in being able to take enough food for the entire journey. It was reported that the French-speaking Saints in the company were deprived of some of their food allowance. Suzette's father Pierre became ill and had to travel in one of the wagons that accompanied the handcarts. The company's captain thought he was shirking and cut his rations. It is believed that in large part his illness was caused by starvation. When Pierre was dying, his wife Jeanne Marie climbed on the wagon to have some last words with him. He told her he would not make it to the Salt Lake Valley but that when the rest of the family got to the Valley, they would never lack for bread.

When the captain of the company saw Jeanne Marie talking to Pierre he thought she was shirking. He rode up and struck her several times with his whip and pulled her off the wagon. [This whipping incident verified in separate accounts by two great-granddaughters of Pierre Stalé.] That night, when the wagon stopped for camp, Jeanne Marie [or Marie as she was known] and her children found Pierre had died. He died at the Platte River on August 17, 1856, and was buried near the river. [In the record of the handcart company he is called Peter Stalle, the American form of both names. Some accounts say he died and was buried near the Sweetwater. An explanation is that it may have been near the confluence of the North Platte and Sweetwater Rivers.] The company was only a few weeks short of reaching the valley at the time of his death. They reached Salt Lake Valley September 26, 1856.

With her father's death and her mother's poor health, the responsibility of pulling the handcart fell to nineteen-year old Suzette and her eighteen-year old brother Daniel. It is said that her little sister Marguerite, [later Margaret], six years old, walked the whole thousand miles except when she was carried across a stream by twelve-year old Marie.

Upon hearing of the pending arrival of the handcart company, Philippe's two sons, Louis Philip and John Paul [called Philip and Paul], immediately went to Salt Lake and brought the Stalé family and the other Vaudois Saints to Fort Brigham in Ogden. The Stalés lived in a crude dugout the first winter and had to be rescued

several times when the severe snow storms completely covered their shelter. The Stalés were looked after and helped by the Cardons. They moved to Logan when the Cardons moved, and some six years after their arrival, the widow Marie Stalé married Philippe Cardon as his second wife. Philippe's son Louis Philip had married Suzette Stalé less than a year after they arrived from Italy, 11 March 1857.

Suzette was Louis Philip's second wife. Philip's first wife was Sarah Ann Welborn. They were unable to have children. As was the custom, Joseph Samuel Cardon, the first son of Philip and Suzette, was given to Sarah to raise. They didn't tell Joseph who his mother was, but in later life he said he knew Suzette was his mother. Philip settled in Oxford, Idaho, for a few years but, when the US Deputy Marshals started hunting the polygamists in that area, Philip went to Brigham Young to ask his advice. The story is told that Brigham Young arose from his chair, smote the palm of his hand with the fist of the other and said, "Brother Cardon, it is about time for the Saints to move to Arizona.. Be here in a week..the company will be ready to leave."

Suzette stayed in Idaho for several years and didn't move until some years later at the time Louis Philip moved to Mexico when the colonies were started there. Suzette had to be able to provide for herself and her family. It was written of Suzette.. "The industrious and thrifty habits of Suzette kept her family well-clothed and well-fed. She wove her own cloth from wool, coloring it with plants and indigo. She even made suits for her husband and sons. These clothes were durable and beautiful, and some were good thirty-five to fifty years later." Suzette grew strawberries and dried them. The University of Arizona Home Economics Department "asked for samples of them, saying they had never heard of strawberries keeping in places like Arizona and Mexico."

In Mexico two of Suzette's sons, Joseph Samuel and Louis Paul, helped build the "Big Canal" to bring water to the colonies. Louis Paul did the surveying, and Joseph Samuel was chief engineer. When they were building the canal, many thought they would fail, because it looked as if their design planned for water to run uphill. When the water was turned on, the canals worked perfectly. Both Louis Paul and Joseph Samuel contracted typhoid fever before the project was finished. Louis Paul recovered, but Joseph Samuel died. Suzette said she felt as if the canal was a monument for her son.

Suzette's faith is shown by what happened at the time the Saints had to leave Mexico because of Pancho Villa and the revolutionists. The Mormons were only given a few hours to prepare and could only take what they could carry. Many tried to hide their treasured

possessions by burying them or hiding them in the attics. Suzette was asked if she wasn't going to try to hide her things. She replied "No, they will never touch any of my things." Her son Louis Paul Cardon's home was badly misused and stripped of everything. The large parlor and living room was used to stable horses of the revolutionists. Suzette's home, a little three room adobe, stood just a few yards away. When Louis Paul later sent teams and wagons to the colonies to bring back whatever they could, the driver who went to Suzette's home brought back everything she owned. Nothing had been molested. She had trunks of clothing, bed linen, table linen, quantities of dried and preserved fruit. Elmer Cardon, son of Joseph, who drove the wagon, said it did not look as though the door had even been opened, although it had been left unlocked.

#### **Other accounts of Suzette Stalé:**

Granddaughter Lucille Matthews - "From my earliest memory of Grandmother to the last time I saw her, she never seemed to age a day. She was not the type of Grandmother on whose lap you sat, and listened to her stories while stuffing yourself sick on the cookies she baked.

"Her eyes were sparkling black, and in her youth her hair was a beautiful brown. She was small -- not over five feet--and weighed less than 100 pounds, even in all the many 'pettiskirts' she wore. Her movements were quick, light and graceful. She had a keen sense of humor, a cheery disposition and was always energetic and industrious.

"After we left Mexico and were living near Tucson how proud we were to take her to town on window shopping tours. She looked as if she had just stepped out of a Currier and Ives print in her quaint clothes and quite dignified bearing. She had no idea she was unusual, attracting attention wherever she went. People openly admired her. The comments always were, 'Oh, isn't she adorable! Where did she come from?'"

Strawberries: She always had a strawberry patch from the time she was married. She thought delicate, luscious red strawberries were exquisite. In Idaho, after the crop ripened, she used to pick them and serve them with sugar and cream at a little ice cream parlor she had.

**Thrift:** Stanley Cardon said, "I remember how thrifty she was. She didn't want to waste anything! When I brought fresh milk to her, she would drink the last of the old milk, which, without refrigeration, had always gone sour, before she gave me the bottle to take home."

She had a hard time seeing well when she got older. One morning, Irene had invited Suzette to come over and eat white corn meal mush for breakfast. Going over to the big black stove, she thought it looked quite thin, so asked her if she might thicken it. Irene said of course and that the corn meal was in a jar right there. She put in a handful; it was still thin, so she added another and another. At last, exasperated, she pleaded, "Please come over here, Irena, and see what's the matter with this mush!" She saw right away that Grandmother had been adding white sugar to it. When Suzette was told to put it in the dog's dish she said "No," She had made it, and she would eat it, if it killed her!

Stanley gives another insight: Because grandfather was wounded when he and some other soldiers were fighting Indians, the government sent her a pension check which was \$12 every month. It was a wonderful feeling for her to have that independence. Once in awhile she awarded him a buffalo head nickel for helping her.

Amazing as it may seem, she had accumulated over six thousand dollars in stocks by the time she left Mexico. It must have been one of the greatest trials of her life to lose that because she prized being independent. Nevertheless, no one ever heard her mention it, let alone complain.

**Rattlesnakes:** One day when Suzette came out of her house and looked down by the steps she saw a rattlesnake. She jumped down on its head and stomped it to death. Others in the family made her promise not to kill any more rattlesnakes by herself.

**Rebaptism:** In the early days of the church if someone had been sick for quite some time they would be administered to and rebaptized to help the healing. Suzette had been ill for quite some time one winter so it was arranged for her to be rebaptized. She was taken to a pond in a carriage. Nearby, a fire was made to warm her after the baptism. However, with the baptism completed, she said she thought to herself that the baptism was to make her well, and well people don't need rides or fires. So, to the amazement of everyone who had come to the baptism, she ran past the carriage and the fire and ran home to change into dry clothes. It was with even greater amazement, that those watching saw her outrun the horses pulling the carriage which followed her to try to give her a ride home.

**Death:** "At the age of 86, one hot July day in 1923, she was visiting with some of her granddaughters and nieces, talking about differences in dress styles and dances. She was still graceful and spry, and, laughing, she asked if they would like her to show them one of her native dances, the "dance for the grapes." Of course they were fascinated!

"It was a dance she had danced many times in the spring time of her life, as a girl in the foothills of the Alps in Italy. But, perhaps, even for someone as active and exuberant as Suzette, it was a bit too lively a dance to do at 86. However, she hitched up her skirt and with spirit began the vigorous dance of her youth. Suddenly she stumbled and fell, clutching her throat. She cried, "Le Couperet! le couperet!", the word for guillotine. She may have meant her throat hurt as someone's would who was being beheaded with the guillotine.

"Willing hands helped her to bed. Soon she lay peacefully resting. A short time later, when her son came into the room she no longer recognized him, but she began to pray in French, her native language, just as she had every night of her life before going to rest. As the shadows of her life's evening closed, her last words were a prayer of faith. Grandmother Suzette Stalé Cardon had endured faithfully to the end with charity, patience and grace."

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