



“Provides a fascinating view into British, African, and American history and demonstrates how the Latter-day Saint experience brings them all together.”

—Jeffrey G. Cannon, Laura F. Willes
Research Associate at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship



The Life and Adventures of Eli Wiggill: *South African 1820 Settler, Wesleyan Missionary, and Latter-day Saint*

Edited By Fred E. Woods, Jay H. Buckley, and Hunter T. Hallows

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Description:

The autobiography of Eli Wiggill offers a captivating narrative of one family's journey from Gloucester, England, to South Africa, and eventually to Salt Lake City during the mid-nineteenth century. Eli and Susannah Wiggill's conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in South Africa serves as a focal point in their remarkable story. Eli's retelling vividly portrays their steadfast faith, missionary efforts, and the challenges they faced as pioneers in establishing communities of South African Saints. From their immigration to South Africa to their eventual migration to Zion, the Wiggills' experiences offer valuable insights into the early history of the Church and the global gathering of its members.

With meticulous attention to detail, *The Life and Adventures of Eli Wiggill: South African 1820 Settler, Wesleyan Missionary, and Latter-day Saint* presents Wiggill's original manuscript, enriched with extensive footnotes providing context and clarity. This publication aims to rectify previous shortcomings by preserving the integrity of Wiggill's narrative while enhancing accessibility for contemporary readers. It not only chronicles a remarkable transnational journey but also sheds light on themes of faith, perseverance, and the pioneering spirit, making it a compelling read for historians, scholars, and anyone interested in the early history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the global migration of its members.

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Praise from early reviewers

- “*The Life and Adventures of Eli Wiggill* is more than a little-known Latter-day Saint conversion narrative, more than a missionary memoir, and more than an account of emigration and pioneer settlement (though it is all of the above). It offers readers insight into a variety of subjects, including British colonialism in South Africa, religious rivalry in the Atlantic world, slavery and emancipation in the British empire, and family life in the nineteenth century. The editors deserve credit and gratitude for their careful work in making this important source more widely available to readers and researchers.” —Christopher Cannon Jones, co-editor of *Missionary Interests: Protestant and Mormon Missions in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*
- “The historical setting surrounding Eli and Susannah Bentley Wiggill and their nine children reveals a story of faith, courage, and devotion as one of the first South African families to join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1850s. Eli Wiggill’s autobiography is worthy of a careful read to appreciate and comprehend his astonishing transnational adventures in Africa and Utah.” —Michael T. Lowe, author of *African Eden* and *African Eden II*, published family histories of the Lowe and Wiggill ancestral lines in South Africa.
- “Eli Wiggill offers us an eye-witness account as a member of the 1820 inaugural group of settlers from England to its newly acquired Cape Colony in South Africa. He candidly describes his life, his family, and career as a farmer, master wagon maker around the colony, and the natural environment. Then in the late 1850s he encounters missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and becomes a leader of the group in the Colony before emigrating to Utah in the United States. In the 1870s he returns to South Africa for a few years to visit friends and family where he notes the many changes in the Colony. He’s an ordinary man who leads a remarkable life and we are privileged to have his journal as he wrote it. Particularly since both he and his friend Henry Talbot are my family’s ancestors.” —Riley Moffat, retired senior librarian at Brigham Young University Hawaii and co-author of *Saints of Tonga*, *Gathering to La‘ie*, and the *Palapala ‘Aina* series of volumes on the history of the mapping of Hawai‘i.

About the Editors

[Fred E. Woods](#) (PhD, University of Utah) has worked at Brigham Young University as a professor of Religious Education since 1998. From 2005–2010 he held a Richard L. Evans Professorship of Religious Understanding and a BYU Moral Education Professorship from 2019-2021.

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The editors are available for interviews if you would like to speak with them or receive a review copy of the book, please contact lily@koffordbooks.com.