

Stories of Muriel Ives Newhall Barrow: Elizabeth Cheney

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Teach, Teach, Teach...

Dear Elizabeth Cheney, tiny, plump, copper haired, was one of the first to answer the call to pioneer in South America. Dedicated and radiant, she went forth to plant the standard of Bahá'u'lláh, and from the first she was beset by difficulties. Everything in the world seemed to happen to her. She was ill, funds she had counted on failed to materialize, the various methods of transportation that were scheduled were either detoured or failed entirely - but. nothing daunted her. With determination and great courage, she continued to press on. Finally, she reached the last leg of her journey - a river boat that was to take her to her destination. With relief and joy, she boarded the boat, only to be awakened close to midnight - the boat had struck submerged rocks and was sinking. Elizabeth had only time to get out of her stateroom, run on deck and, with the water rising nearly to her waist, plunge over the rail and into the river. It was pitch dark, moon less, and no stars. The water was cold. Elizabeth floundered, went under, rose, prayer on her lips and in her heart - and grasped a log that was floating. A moment later she realized she was not alone grasping the log - another woman spoke to her out of the darkness. And there, with muddy river water smacking against her face, thick darkness pressing around her, the wrecked boat sinking lower and lower and the cries of the drowning echoing around her, Elizabeth gave the Message that she had come pioneering to give - and at the other end of the log her first contact listened.

Told to me by Elizabeth Cheney during the 1944 Convention at the Temple in Wilmette.

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