

CHARLOTTE MEE

Born: February 2, 1836 Loughhons, Lestershire, England

Age: 20

Martin Handcart Company

Charlotte and her sister Betsy (14) had been orphaned at young ages by the deaths of their parents. A sister, Sarah, who was much older, had emigrated to Utah with her husband, Thomas Wright, in 1849, and settled in Nephi. Other friends and fellow Saints mentioned in Charlotte's account likely looked after the girls as well. Charlotte left a brief history, best told in her own words:

“My father's name was William Mee and mother's name was Rose Helen Mee. ... When I was nine years old my father died. When I was twelve years old, mother died, leaving a family of eight, two of them younger than myself.

“I went out to work immediately. I was baptized into the Church at eleven years of age, before mother died. When I was seventeen years old [1853], I sprained or broke some of the ligaments in my ankle and the doctor said I must lose my leg, but I refused to have it amputated. I was forced to use crutches for nearly four years. With my fourteen-year-old sister, I set sail for America on May 25th, 1856, on the ship *Horizon* under Captain Reed. Brother and Sister William Paxman, Sister McPherson, and Langley A. Bailey came over in the same company to Boston. Brother and Sister Thomas Ord also came at the same time.¹

“From Iowa, we came by handcart. Part of the way I walked, and part of the way I was hauled in a wagon or handcart. One day I walked and crawled eight miles, and my knees finally bled. We had a very hard trip.²

“Bad weather came on early and we suffered from cold and hunger, finally reaching Salt Lake City November 30th 1856. The next month my ankle was operated upon and the year following I was baptized for my health and was able to walk soon after.

“In 1856 I was married to George Hill. . . . We were called to St. George and I went through all the hardships of the early settlement of Utah Dixie. Hill died in 1866, after having been everything but a kind and loving husband. He even maltreated me, physically, and made me work in the fields. A year after his death I married Lyman Franklin Beal, to whom I have been sealed . . . for time and eternity.

“We lived together happily for forty-seven years, notwithstanding the hardships of pioneer life. We went through the Indian troubles of Sevier County, living at Glenwood, from which place we moved to Richfield to avoid being killed by the Indians. We moved from Sevier County to Nephi [in] June, 1868, and since then we have lived at Sterling, Ephraim and Nephi. At present I reside at Ephraim. [1909]

“My husband died January 4, 1914. I had one child by my first marriage, a boy who lived to be fourteen months old. This was the only child I was blessed with and had he lived, he would now be nearing sixty years old. I have never regretted coming to Zion, even though my life has been one of hardship and trial.” Charlotte Mee Beal died on April 22, 1917, at the age of 81.

Sources: “Life Sketch of Charlotte Mee Beal,” autobiography, Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; email from Pamela Gassman, Tacoma Washington, May 12, 2010, to Jolene Allphin; *Beneath the casing rock: the George Smith Rust family*, by Ethel R. Jensen, available at Family History Library; “My memories of My Maternal Grandmother, Betsy Mee Green,” by Leda Thompson Jensen, sent from Melisa Clark, Tooele, Utah.

¹Thomas and Eleanor Ord were newlyweds. Langley Bailey (age 18) was with his parents and three younger brothers. William Paxman's wife, Ann, gave birth to a son on June 12 aboard ship. They named him William Reed Horizon Paxman after the ship and Captain Reed. The Paxman family stayed in Philadelphia for a time before completing their journey to Utah. They are grandparents of Marjorie Pay Hinckley. “Sister McPherson” is a reference to Jane Ann Ollerton, age 15, with her family in the Martin company. She later married James R. McPherson. All of these families settled in Nephi. (Ord, Bailey, and Ollerton sketches are in this section of *Tell My Story, Too*.)

²One family account states that Charlotte used crutches off and on throughout her life.