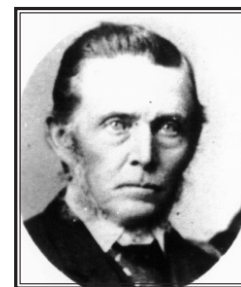


MARY ANN BIDDLE FARMER

Born: December 3, 1830 in England

Age: 25

Hunt Wagon Company



James Morris Farmer

Mary Ann's parents died when she was a small girl, and she was put in an orphanage to be raised. While there, a young girl by the name of Margaretta Clark walked by the orphanage every day and would sometimes stop. (See Margaretta's story in Martin company section of *Tell My Story, Too*.) Margaretta asked her parents if they would let the little girl come live with them. Mary Ann was given a home with the Clarks. When she was old enough, she worked in a lace factory.

Mary Ann married James Farmer, a widower with five children, in October 1854. In October, 1855, Mary Ann and James had a baby boy named Willard. The family joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England. In 1856, Mary Ann (26) and James (39) and their children, Emma Jane (13), Agnes Ann (10), Elizabeth (7), baby Willard, and James's sister, Mary Jane Farmer (26), sailed from Liverpool, England, to America. James's mother, Elizabeth Morris Farmer (68), also emigrated with the family. (She is incorrectly named in the records of the Martin company on some lists, probably because Captain Martin presided over their group on the ship, and they hadn't reached Iowa City yet where the Martin handcart company and Hunt wagon company were organized.) Sadly, Grandmother Elizabeth died at Chicago. The Farmer family was also forced to leave behind two sons, James Fredrick and Fredrick Richard, because their maternal grandmother had hidden them and James was unable to locate them before leaving. However, they came to Utah later with their wives. They are buried in their father's cemetery lot in Salt Lake City.

While preparing for their overland journey, on July 26, 1856, Willard died at the age of 9 months. The Farmer family joined the Hunt wagon company and left Iowa City on August 1, 1856. Mary Ann was not very strong. She would walk until she gave out and then she would ride for a while. Her step-daughter, Elizabeth, was ill the entire journey. Mary Ann and her family had to leave many of their possessions and keepsakes along the trail.

The company endured many hardships from hunger and cold and their oxen gave out and died. Mary Ann's husband would not allow the family to lie down at night without taking off their shoes and covering up well, so they wouldn't suffer from frozen limbs.

The Farmer family was met by rescuers and helped into the Valley. They met other rescuers at Emigration Canyon who were shoveling and packing down the snow so the emigrants could come through. There they joined the company in singing, "Come, Come Ye Saints." Mary Ann had just celebrated her 26th birthday the week before.

Of all their belongings that were abandoned along the way, including \$1,500 worth of goods left with a trader at Fort Laramie, they got one trunk back that contained several silk lace shawls. They were able to sell the shawls in order to meet some of their other needs once they arrived in Zion. Mary Ann and James had three more children. Mary Ann died January 27, 1863, at the age of thirty-two. James worked as a stone mason on the Salt Lake Temple.

Sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneer history files; family histories and photo from Carol Pace - letter to Kurt Ostler, December 19, 2004; "History of Sarah Jane Farmer," copied from Farmer family Bible; "History of Mary Ann Biddle Farmer," unknown author.