

LUKE CARTER

Born: 1811 England (died, probably near Ft. Laramie)

Age: 45

Martin Handcart Company

Luke Carter and William Edwards were sharing the pulling of a handcart. A fellow traveler, Josiah Rogerson, wrote:

“Two bachelors named Luke Carter from the Clitheroe Branch, Yorkshire, England, and William Edward from Manchester, England ... had pulled a covered cart together from Iowa City, Iowa, to here; slept in the same tent, cooked and bunked together, but for several days previous unpleasant and cross words had passed between them. Edwards was a tall, loosely built and slender man physically, and Carter more stocky and sturdy. [Carter] had favored Edwards by letting the latter pull what he could in the shafts for some time. This morning he grumbled and complained ... about being tired, give out and that he couldn't go any further. They were having quite a discussion. Edwards was known as a constant grumbler, and this day, grumbling more than usual, he declared that he would rather die than pull anymore. Carter retorted: ‘Come on. Come on. You'll be all right again when we get a bit of dinner at noon.’ But Edwards kept on begging for him to stop the cart and let him lie down and die. Carter replied, ‘Well, get out and die then.’ The cart was instantly stopped. Carter raised the shafts of the cart. Edwards walked from under the cart and to the south of the road a couple of rods, laid his body down on the level prairie, and in ten minutes he was a corpse.

“We waited (a few carts of us) a few minutes longer till the captain came up and closed Edwards' eyes. A light-loaded open cart was unloaded. The body was put thereon, covered with a quilt, and the writer pulled him to the noon camp, some five or six miles, where we dug his grave and buried him a short distance west of Fort Kearney, Nebraska ...

“Just before Edwards closed his eyes and was dying, Br. Albert Jones ... brought to him a drink of water in a tin pannican and therewith moistened his dying lips.”

Luke Carter also died a few weeks later. Luke had been helping dig graves for others up to this point. Part of Luke Carter's story is also recorded in an account given in the biography of Richard and Emma Laurence Collins, who were pulling their handcart with their four little children and a baby, next to Carter and Edwards. Although the Collins and Josiah Rogerson refer to Luke as a bachelor, he was actually a widower, having married Hannah Pye in 1833. Hannah died on March 10, 1846. Luke's 16-year-old daughter, Nancy, had originally signed up to travel on the ship *Horizon* with her father, but she did not continue her plans.

Luke Carter's brother, John, had also died in 1846. John's widow, Ellen Jackson Carter, and her ten-year-old son, John, were also traveling with the Martin company, possibly with Luke's help. Ellen's parents, Charles and Mary Loxam Jackson, and her brother, William, were also in the company. Charles and Mary Jackson died about the same time as Luke Carter.

Sources: familysearch.org; Josiah Rogerson history; family records of Gayle Gunderson Hunting and Melanie Hunting North.