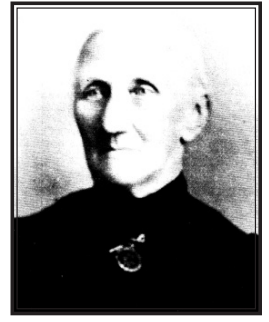
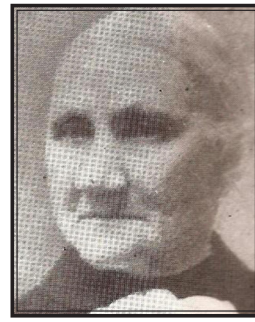


## REBECCA PILGRIM

Born: January 1, 1826 England

Age: 30

Willie Handcart Company



Rebecca was born to Samuel and Betsy Coote Pilgrim at the farm of William Read, Madingly Road, Giles Parish, Cambridge, England, the fifth of ten children. Rebecca was joined in her Zion in the Rocky Mountains by at least two siblings. Her brother, Thomas, had sailed on the ship *Ellen Maria* in 1852 and her sister, Susan Elizabeth, in 1863 aboard the *Amazon*. Thomas and Susan both resided in Smithfield, Cache County, after arriving in Utah.

When Rebecca was 16 years old, her father died. As the oldest of 8 children and her mother to look after, Rebecca helped support the family by establishing a laundry business that served the university students and businessmen in the vicinity of her home.

In spite of the opposition of most of her family and friends, Rebecca joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1853. After making her decision to emigrate to be with the Saints in Utah, she went to bid her family a last farewell and was refused entrance to the home. Her belongings, including a feather tick were thrown out of a window. Rebecca's mother tossed her a coin telling her to never spend it except when she and her children might be hungry for bread.

Rebecca sailed from England aboard the *Thornton*. Returning missionary, James G. Willie, presided over this group of about 500 Saints, following their dreams and what they referred to as the "spirit of gathering." From Iowa City, Iowa, to the Great Salt Lake Valley, Rebecca pushed and pulled a handcart for nearly 1,300 miles.

At some point along the Sweetwater River in present day Wyoming, Rebecca sat down on a large rock in a hypothermic and hungry state. Recognizing the seriousness of her condition, her friends quickly commenced giving her warm drinks, rubbing her limbs and forcing her to walk to restore her circulation and prevent her from freezing to death. At this time another girl in the company, name unknown, was also found in a freezing condition. She was placed in one of the wagons where the women worked on her in the same manner. Rebecca and her friends took turns laying on top of and underneath her in an attempt to restore her body temperature. It was too late, however, for this young woman.

Over 100 years after this incident, a descendant of Rebecca's husband, William Goates, was hunting after school one day with two friends in this same mountainous area of Wyoming where storms often come suddenly and unexpectedly. The three teenage boys were caught in the mountains in a snowstorm without food, shelter or warm clothing of any kind as night fell quickly upon them and the temperatures plunged. Phil Nebeker, the descendant who had been taught this story, was able to recommend this method of staying warm to his friends. (As told to Jolene Allphin by Phil's mother about 2005.) They kept a vigil all night long, the three laying on top of each other and changing places every 15 minutes so that each had a turn to be in the middle and receive some body warmth from the other two. The boys miraculously survived and from this experience emerged a beautiful bronze sculpture by Phil Nebeker. It is a representation of some members of the Willie company. A photograph of the sculpture highlights the cover of the book *Remember* by the Riverton Wyoming Stake of the LDS Church.

## (Rebecca Pilgrim - Page 2)

Rebecca arrived in the Salt Lake Valley with the Willie company on the 9th of November, 1856, remained in Salt Lake City for a week and then moved to Lehi where she found employment at the home of William Goates.

Rebecca married William Goates the next April. Although she was never able to have children of her own, Rebecca became a faithful and devoted mother to William's six children after the death of his first wife. She was said to be "true and loving to them and just as happy and proud of them as their own mother could have been."

Rebecca worked very hard throughout her life. She said that the sweetest morsel of food she ever ate was a whole wheat cake that she made from the first heads of grain that ripened on their own farm. Rebecca was also noted for her kind and generous ways to her friends and neighbors, often parting with her own clothes and providing food for those in need as she looked after the welfare of others.

After her ordeals in the Willie handcart company, Rebecca still possessed a remarkably strong constitution and enjoyed good health, working hard in her home and in the fields. She was confined to bed for two weeks prior to her death at the home of George Hyrum Goates. She died on April 18, 1909, at the age of 83 and is buried in Lehi, Utah.

Pictured here are both sides of the coin that was tossed her way by her mother as Rebecca left her home in England. (Used by permission of the Goates family.) The current possessor of the coin stated that his Grandfather used to get it out of his dresser drawer and show it to him and tell the story that his (step) grandmother, Rebecca, had told him. There may have been more than one coin, but Rebecca gave this particular one to this grandson.



Rebecca Pilgrim Goates' Coin

Sources: *The History of the William Goates Sr. Family*; email from Ken Goates, April 12, 2006; photos courtesy Russ Goates; familysearch.org; *Remember*, by Riverton Wyoming Stake, 1997, cover art, see pages 195-196 of *Remember* for the inspiring story of Phil Nebeker's sculpture.

