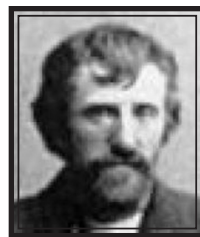


CAROLINE GARSTONE WILLIAMS BLAKEY

Age: 40
 Born: England
 Martin Handcart Company



Caroline G.
Williams Blakey
(Price)



Richard Brigham
Blakey



John Moroni
Blakey

Caroline was born in the hills of Malvern in the town of Shaknell, Herefordshire, England, on September 2, 1815. Her first marriage was in 1840 to George Williams, a member of the Royal Marines. They had one baby, Caroline. George died when Caroline was an infant.

Caroline next married Richard John Blakey. Richard and Caroline had both been converted to “Mormonism” by Wilford Woodruff as he was serving a mission in England. Caroline was especially fond of Elder Woodruff and referred to him as her “Gospel Father.” Richard served as president of the Crossmore Branch of the Church until the family moved to Liverpool in 1855.

In May 1856 the Blakey’s boarded the ship *Horizon* with their two small sons, John Moroni, age 6, and Richard Brigham, 8 months.¹ 16-year-old Caroline Williams was signed up to go with them, but her grandparents dissuaded her from going with untruths about the Mormons.² Caroline wrote to her daughter for years but only once received a reply, the letters being kept from her.

Caroline helped Richard with the handcart as much as possible, but also had to keep an eye on her little sons. Richard Brigham was carried or rode in the handcart. John Moroni walked part of the time. When Richard became ill from exposure and the extreme hardships, Caroline put both her boys in the handcart and pulled it herself. One night Caroline made Richard comfortable and put their little boys in the arms of their father, one on each side. The next morning she found the boys still asleep in his arms, but her husband had died. This exact date is not recorded, but was between October 19 and 28, while the company was stranded at Red Buttes near the last crossing of the North Platte River. Richard was reportedly buried in a shallow grave with seven other brethren. Each was wrapped in a much needed blanket or sheet. Burial coverings were donated at great sacrifice.

Caroline and her two little boys survived their trek, but Caroline’s head had become frozen and caused her hair to turn white for a time. On November 30, 1856, Caroline walked into the Salt Lake Valley. Two of John’s toes were badly frozen and had to be amputated.

In 1857 Caroline married Charles Price who was said to have witnessed Caroline’s great sorrows and admired her courage. They had a daughter, Emily Maria. Emily Maria married Alfred Alma Bybee. They had nine daughters who each received a college teaching degree.

Caroline lived to be 64 years old. Her descendants said of her: “She was an educated woman and taught her own and the neighbor children to read, write and figure. (Thatcher) She had a hard frontier life. She was small and quick and had dark brown eyes. She was very spiritual and enjoyed many inspirations from the Holy Spirit.” Caroline’s obituary, published in the *Deseret News* and the *Millennial Star*, concludes: “[She] crossed the plains with the handcarts. On that tedious journey she lost her husband and 1 child. She bore a strong testimony to the truth of the gospel to the last. She leaves two children and three more, that she was truly a mother to,³ and a large circle of friends to mourn her loss, those who knew her best, loved her most.”

Sources: Email from Laraine Harris, 2008; “The Life sketch of Caroline Garstone Gaston and Richard John Blakey,” history and letter from Aldene Rasmussen, 2006; family histories from Stephen B. Smith; Daughters of Utah Pioneers histories.

¹There may have been another baby. A Blakey family history submitted to Daughters of Utah Pioneers in 2001 by Roberta Holt Thatcher states: “Great grandmother’s infant daughter was born and buried at sea.”

²On British Mission Records for *Horizon* as Caroline Blakey, age 16, with her family.

³Charles Price also married Ann Oakey of the Willie handcart company in 1857. Ann died in 1865, leaving three small children. These are the children that Caroline raised.