

## ELIZABETH SIMPSON HAIGH BRADSHAW

Born: Feb. 10, 1808 England

Age: 48

Martin Handcart Company



Robert Bradshaw



Isabella Bradshaw (Astle)



Richard Bradshaw family

Elizabeth was born to a well-to-do family, but orphaned at age nine. She was then reared in the family of her father's sister. She married William Haigh in 1834, and to them were born two children: Samuel and Sarah Ann. William died about 1840. Elizabeth joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints soon after. At age thirty-six, Elizabeth married Richard Bradshaw, also a member of the Church. They had four children—one died as an infant. They had been preparing to leave England when the news of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith reached them. They were advised to remain in England until affairs quieted down. Before they could leave for America, Richard died of pneumonia in October 1849. Elizabeth was expecting a baby at the time. She was blessed with a little boy whom she named Richard.

In her second widowhood, she never gave up the hope of gathering to Zion. She worked, waited and prayed. The opportunity came in May 1856, when she found herself and five children on the ship *Horizon* ready to sail from Liverpool to America. Her brothers tried to persuade her to remain in England and promised to educate her children and care for all of them if she would stay. She turned to them and said, "I am going to Zion."

Elizabeth and her five children: Samuel Haigh (age 20), Sarah Ann Haigh (19), Robert Hall Bradshaw (11), Isabella Jane Bradshaw (10), and Richard Paul Bradshaw (6), sailed on the ship *Horizon* to Boston, then went by train to Iowa. Here they joined the Martin handcart company. Elizabeth had left England with plenty of clothing and other belongings, but she could only take a small amount. Most of her supplies were given away to those in need. She did pay for her two wedding dresses to be sent to Utah, and later was able to give them to her two daughters.

Elizabeth was a woman of great faith. Before she left England, she had received a blessing that promised she would take all her children to Zion. When the company reached the last crossing of the Platte River, the winter storm began. Everyone had to cross. Many were too old and weak and some too small. Rations had previously been reduced. Elizabeth's oldest daughter, 19-year-old Sarah Ann Haigh, carried many people across the river on her back. Undoubtedly many lives were saved by this heroic girl, as 13 to 18 people died the next day. Some who died were also those who had spent their last strength carrying others across this river. It was here that Elizabeth proved her great faith once again. She was a very small and dainty woman, less than 5 feet tall. She took 6-year-old Richard, and seated him upon her shoulders with his legs around her neck as he held to her head. As they started across, they were caught by the current and carried downstream. Several called, "Let the boy go ... or you will both be drowned. Save yourself." She refused to give them heed and struggled on until she finally made it to the opposite side where Richard was lifted off her shoulders and she was helped out of the water. In her exhausted condition, she raised her right arm to the square and bore witness to the onlookers that God had saved her and her son.

At another time as conditions became worse for the company, Samuel was pronounced dead and brought to his mother. Elizabeth's faith was strong. She still believed she would take all of her children to Zion. She asked that the Elders anoint him with oil and administer to him. The Elders did so and Samuel recovered.

Elizabeth and her children arrived in Salt Lake City on November 30, 1856. They were sent to Bountiful to the home of Bishop Stoker. They stayed there for six years, then moved to Hyrum. Her first home was a log building with a dirt roof and floor. She died on October 24, 1872, at the age of 64, a humble and faithful pioneer woman.

Sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; *The Millers*, volumes I and II, compiled by Bonnie Miller, 2010; *Autobiography of Elwyn Fred Ralph*, 2012; Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website. See Sarah Ann Haigh in Martin section of *Tell My Story, Too* for artwork depicting the carrying stories of Elizabeth and her daughter, Sarah. Elizabeth's story is portrayed in the T.C. Christensen movie *Ephraim's Rescue*.