

AMY BRITWELL LOADER

Born: 1802 England

Age: 54

Martin Handcart Company



Amy Loader



Tamar Loader (Ricks)

James and Amy Loader came to America in 1855. James had worked in England as foreman and head gardener for a wealthy gentleman by the name of Sir Henry Lambert. James and Amy's four sons and nine daughters were all born on this estate where James had worked for 35 years. In the 1850s, the Loaders joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and James was fired from his job as a consequence. In November 1855, they left for America on the ship *John J. Boyd* with at least five of their unmarried children. Their oldest daughter, Ann (Dalling), had already emigrated and was awaiting their arrival in Utah. Sarah Loader wrote that four of the thirteen Loader children "would not come to America. . . . The four who did not join the church were the ones who stayed in England, and we never saw them again."



The Loader family first went to Williamsburg, New York, where they worked for a time. Even their daughter, Sarah, who was not yet twelve, worked as a nursemaid in the home of a wealthy family by the name of Sawyer. They left there in June of 1856 and traveled to Iowa where they joined with their daughter, Zilpah, her husband, John Jacques, and daughter, Flora. Zilpah was expecting a baby, which was born on the plains in August, shortly after their handcart trek began.

James Loader died from the effects of diarrhea and dysentery on September 27, having been ill for over a month. His family had pulled him in the handcart all day. Due to the deep sand and steep hills, it was one of the worst days for James and his family. His daughter, Patience, wrote of starting out that morning: "My poor mother and all our family . . . were all kneeling on the ground around him. Poor, dear father realizing he had to leave us, but too weak to talk to us. He looked at us all with tears in his eyes, then he said to mother with great difficulty, "You know I love my children." ... These were the last words he ever said. ... It was a great comfort to us all that we had him with us on the cart as the teams had such a terrible time to get through the sand and the last of them did not get up until after dark. The brethren came to administer to Father in the afternoon. They anointed him, oiled his lips, they were so dry and parched. They put oil on his lips and then he opened his mouth and licked the oil from them and smiled but did not speak. The brethren knew he was dying. They said, "We will seal Father Loader up to the Lord for He alone is worthy of him. He has done his work, been a faithful servant in the church and we the servants of God seal him unto God, our Father." To our surprise my dear father said, "Amen," to the blessing. ... We started again from that place at six o'clock in the evening to find a camping place where we could get wood and water. It got dark long before we camped. We traveled over brush and an awful rough road. We did not camp until past ten o'clock. We could not move poor Father as he was not yet dead, so we put the tent up and took the handcart into the tent and our dear Father died ... at fifteen minutes past eleven o'clock, that night. ... we had lost and were bereft of one of the best of earthly Fathers. ... The next morning Brother Samuel Jones and his Brother Albert dug [his grave]. ... We had to wrap my dear father in a quilt, all we had to use and put him in the grave with the earth thrown in upon his poor body. It did seem a great trial to have to leave our dear father behind that morning, knowing we had looked upon that sweet smiling face for the last time on earth, but not without hope of meeting him again on the morning of the resurrection for he had been a faithful servant of God and bore testimony to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ numbers of times and we know if we, his children, follow his example that we will meet our dear father again and be reunited with him to dwell in unity and love all through eternity. ... One comfort to our minds, our father had a good deep grave so that the wolves could not get to him and we felt to thank God and ask Him to bless our brethren for their kindness to us in our great sorrow."

While Amy was considered a very fragile woman at the beginning of the trek, she became a very strong woman in guiding her family to Zion as a new widow. She put on all the extra clothing she could carry under her own, so when the children needed dry clothing, she always had it, including dry stockings for them after fording streams. As the weather became colder and provisions shorter, they were given 4 ounces of flour a day for each person. Instead of the usual



Robert Loader

(Amy Loader - Page 2)

gruel, Mother Loader made hers into little biscuits and would have them through the day, thus having a bite or two for the children when they were tired and faint.

One day, a man lying by the roadside, said he could only get up if he had a little bread. Amy gave him some from her meager supply. The man later thanked Amy for saving his life.

After one exceptionally cold night, Amy could not get her daughters to arise. Patience recorded, "Mother says, 'come girls, this will not do. I believe I will have to dance to you and try to make you feel better.'" Sarah wrote: "Mother got up and pretended to step dance (She was a step dancer in her life). She slipped down and they all laughed and then they all got up." Patience continued: "In a moment we was all up to help our dear Mother up for we was afraid she was hurt. She laughed and said, 'I thought I could soon make you all jump up if I danced to you.' Then we found that she fell down purposely for she knew we would all get up to see if she was hurt. She said that she was afraid her girls was going to give out and get discouraged and she said that would never do to give up."

Amy Loader was not alone in encouraging her children. Patience related that one day as she was pulling the handcart through the deep snow a strange man appeared to her: "He came and looked in my face. He said, 'Are you Patience?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'I thought it was you. Travel on, there is help for you. You will come to a good place. There is plenty.' With this he was gone. He disappeared. I looked but never saw where he went. This seemed very strange to me. I took this as someone sent to encourage us and give us strength." The Loader family was met by more rescuers at camp that night.

After arriving in the Valley, Amy went to Pleasant Grove to the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Amy and John Dalling. She remained there until her death in 1885 at the age of 83. Her descendants have written of her, "Amy Britnell Loader protected, sustained and cheered her children and others without complaining and manifested great faith in God." Her son-in-law, John Jaques, wrote: "[James Loader's] chief solicitude was for his wife, who, he feared, would not be able to endure the journey. But she did endure it. She endured it bravely, although it made her a sorrowing widow. She has lived a life of usefulness to the present time, yet still a widow, for she could never believe there was a man left in the world equal to her husband."



Loader sisters at Salt Lake Temple dedication, 1893. Seated: Patience Loader Rozsa Archer, Ann Loader Dalling Paul. Standing: Sarah Loader Harris Holman, Zilpah Loader Jaques, Tamar Loader Ricks, Maria Loader Harris.

(Photo courtesy of Loader descendants serving as missionaries at Martin's Cove, 2012.)



The Bread of Life
painting by Julie Rogers

Sources: *Life history and writings of John Jaques including a diary of the Martin Handcart Company*, by Stella Jaques Bell, 1978; Sandra Ailey Petree, *Recollections of Past Days: The Autobiography of Patience Loader Rozsa Archer*, 2006, All USU Press Publications, Book 37 (online at http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1036&context=usupress_pubs), excerpts at Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website; "Sarah Loader Harris Holman," in Merrill D. Beal research files, 1938-1969, MS 4022, folder 3, Church History Library. (Quotes from the accounts of Sarah and Patience Loader have been edited for readability by Jolene Allphin.)