

MARY SOAR TAYLOR

Born: 1825 England
 Age: 31
 Martin Handcart Company



Mary emigrated to Zion as a very determined widow with her two sons, William Henry (age 12) and Jesse Soar (10). Her story is best told in a letter she wrote at the age of 56. She died four years later. The following letter was written February 20, 1881, and placed in a Relief Society Chest to be opened 50 years later:

I, Mary Moore, desire to leave to my posterity a biographical sketch of my life to be read by them fifty years hence for their information and benefit. I was born in the village of Beauverlee, Nottinghamshire, England, on January 22, 1825. My parents names are Henry Soar and Edith Burrows. My parents at that time were of no religious denomination.

At an early age I joined the Methodist Society. At the age of eighteen I married William Jesse Taylor who was not a professor of religion. By him I had two sons named William Henry and Jesse Soar. We lived very happy for a little over two years when I was left a widow. Three years from this time I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and in the year 1856, I, with my two sons started for Utah Territory. We left our home on the 26th of May and crossed the sea in the Ship *Horizon*.

We had a prosperous voyage of nearly forty days and landed at Boston from which place we traveled by rail to Iowa City, State of Iowa. We left Iowa City as "Martin's Company." We had a perilous journey across the plains [and] had to endure many hardships. We encountered snow in the Black Hills which continued till we arrived in Salt Lake City. My son, William, was taken sick with the mountain fever 700 miles from Salt Lake City, and myself and Jesse had to pull him in our cart till we arrived at Sweetwater where teams from Salt Lake City met us and there we left our carts. Previous to this time we had to subsist on four ounces of flour a day for nine days in the snow knee deep. ... Many had their limbs badly frozen. William and myself among the number. [The flesh fell off her toes and side of left foot. Protruding bones were removed with scissors.] We arrived in Salt Lake City on the last day of November of the same year after suffering many hardships and privations for the truth's sake, but I know my record is sure.

We arrived in Payson on the 2nd of December and were well treated by the people. [They were cared for in the home of Rachel Drollinger.] I could not stand on my feet for three months after I arrived. In the month of February, 1858, I married John H. Moore, being his third living wife. In the year 1860 in the month of July, my eldest son William died of a disease contracted while crossing the plains.

In the year 1862 my father arrived in Payson, having joined the Church and emigrated. In the year 1864 my son, Jesse, married Sarah A. Marsh, who are living at this date and have six children living and have two buried.

In the year 1868 the Female Relief Society was organized in Payson. I was appointed and set apart to act as second counselor to Jane B. Simons, President of said society, which position I hold today. I also hold the position of second counselor to the President of the Silk Association of this place.

I have written this sketch of my life as stated for the benefit of my grandchildren and others and I also add my testimony of the divinity of this work. I know that it is the work of God and hope and trust that any of my posterity that may come in possession of this may be strengthened in their faith by it, and be worthy of such parentage for truly we suffered much for the truth's sake, but the reward of the faithful is sure.

I have six living grandchildren: Sarah Almira, William Jesse, Samuel B., Edith H., John C., Eva May. I will direct this to John Cyprian Taylor [grandson], hoping that he may live and become an honorable and useful man.

I subscribe myself, Your loving Grandmother, Mary Soar Taylor Moore

Mary earned her living after the death of her husband by sewing seams up the backs of stockings which were sent to her flat woven. Jesse and William had helped her with this task in England. Jesse grew to manhood and fulfilled all of Mary's dreams of him being a righteous man. He and his wife served 2 ½ years on the Muddy Mission, returned to Payson, and had thirteen children. Jesse held many responsible positions in the Church, including that of Bishop. He also held many important positions in the community, including School Trustee (21 years), Building Superintendent, Street and County Roads Supervisor, City Councilman (20 years), Watermaster and Justice of the Peace. It was said of him that his word was as good as his bond. The Taylor School building in Payson was named for Jesse because of his integrity in the cause of education.

Sources: "Old Letters: To a Grandson," *Our Pioneer Heritage*, compiled by Kate B. Carter, Daughters of Utah Pioneers publication, 1958-77, 3:247-49; "Mary Soar Taylor," family history; interviews with Donna Jean Millar, 2003 & 2011. See also Jesse Soar Taylor in Martin company section of *Tell My Story, Too*.