

WILLIAM M.¹ READ

Born: 1793 England (Died Oct. 1, 1856 near Ft. Laramie)

Age: 63

Willie Handcart Company

William was from North Crawley, England, born just before the turn of the century in 1793 or 1794. Little is known about his early life. In 1856 his occupation was a butcher. He may have performed this duty for the Willie handcart company.²

William married Sarah Brimley of Kempston, Buckingham, England, on December 18, 1814, at the age of 20. They became the parents of eleven children, three daughters and eight sons, all born in England. The family accepted the gospel and was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

William and Sarah's oldest son, William Smith Read, immigrated to Utah in 1853 with his wife, Elizabeth Simmons, and their infant daughter, Sarah. They traveled overland in the Moses Clawson Company. William had come to America and was in St. Louis when he met Elizabeth Simmons. They were married in St. Louis in 1852 at the Hart residence, the family with whom Elizabeth had been staying. Their daughter, Sarah, was born on the plains as they traveled to Utah in 1853. At some time, William M. and Sarah Read's three youngest sons also left England for Utah. These boys were John Brimley, Ezra and Joseph Paul. Ezra died from cholera while in St. Louis. He was buried in an unmarked grave.

William M. Read and his wife, Sarah Brimley (age 63), sailed on the *Thornton* in 1856 with Joseph Read (age 14).³ Joseph appears to be their son, but some family histories indicate he may have been their grandson, the son of Naomi Read (1824-1876). (Naomi is not shown on the Willie company roster or any other overland travel, but died 1876 in Ogden, Utah.) He was likely assisting William with the butchering, as Joseph was a "supply attendant" in the Willie company.

William died somewhere close to Fort Laramie on October 1, 1856. Levi Savage recorded in his journal: "To day Bro Reade died of a disease at the hart. His age is 64." The Willie company journal recorded: "William Read died coming to camp in a wagon—he was born at North Crawley, Buckinghamshire, England, aged 63." Sarah and Joseph survived the journey and with the help of rescuers they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on November 9, 1856.

William Smith Read had already settled in the Ogden area. Sarah and Joseph went to stay with him. Sarah recovered from her ordeal and continued to keep house, administer to the sick and do whatever was needed for the next six years as a widow. She was adept at all the skills needed for her new life: sewing, quilting and cooking.

One day Sarah walked the eight or nine miles to the home of her son, John Brimley Read, in Slaterville. After partaking of a good meal, she curled up by the fireplace as she complained of a small pain and just wanted to rest awhile before retiring. Sarah died quietly by the fireplace on June 18, 1862, at the age of sixty-nine years. She loved the gospel dearly and possessed a great testimony. William and Sarah were together again, and they had given their all to help settle Zion.

Sources: Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel online database; <http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu>; Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; email from Ray O. Couch to Jolene Allphin, January 8, 2012.

¹"William M Read was christened as William Read, but added an initial because there were three William Reads related and alive, so he put the letter "M" as an initial and it is not the first letter of a name." (Daughters of Utah Pioneers submission from descendant, Margaret Bailey, edited by Lorraine A. Winter, 1993.)

²William Woodward was a sub-captain of 100, and kept the Willie Company Journal after the first of October. In 1906, he wrote a letter to Albert Jones who was organizing a Handcart Veterans Association reunion. In the letter, Woodward indicated: "Our butcher died, so I became butcher."

³A letter written by William M. Read on March 21, 1856, indicates to his children that he was given only two days notice to prepare to leave. He was concerned about his daughter, Amelia, being left without help with her boys, as her husband "went away and told no one" where he was. In the letter, addressed to "Dear Children," William asked, "Is he with you?" Amelia's husband, William Henry Bailey, was said to be a roamer, and he may have gone out to sea.