

EMMA LOUISE BATCHELOR (or Bachelor)

Born: 1836 England

Age: 20

Martin Handcart Company



Emma Batchelor crossed the Ocean on the *Horizon* with the Edward Martin company. After arriving at Iowa City, this large group was split. Emma began her handcart trek with the first group—the Jesse Haven handcart company. After arriving at Florence, Nebraska, Haven’s group was reincorporated into the Martin company and Jesse Haven then traveled with the Hodgett wagon company. However, Emma only remained with Haven’s company for a few days after leaving Iowa City.

The following journal entries made by Jesse Haven show some of the difficulties he had in commanding cooperation in his group: “July 30, This morning at prayers, we disfellowshipped Emma Batchelor, who left us yesterday and went out among the gentiles to tarry there. August 1, [three or four had left the night before and] Two families talk of leaving and wish to get my counsel. To do so, at the last, I told one of them he might do as he thought proper, and I would not disfellowship him for it. ... Brother Moses left today with his family, also Brother Hunter and his family. Saturday, August 9 ... camped on the Middle Coon River ... Saints traveled badly today. Much problems after we got into camp. Eleven left us.”

On July 29, the Martin and Haven companies had barely left Iowa City. There were nearby towns where Emma could have received lodging, probably only for one or two nights. She then resumed her travel with the Martin handcart company when it came through.

After the Haven and Martin companies were consolidated at Florence, Emma was assigned to travel with the Paul Gourley family. Sister Ellison Gourley had been ill and Emma’s help was very much appreciated. The Gourley family had two handcarts, one pulled just by the younger children. George Gourley, age 7, wrote, “We were glad to have [Emma] because she was young and strong and meant more flour for our mess.” Nicholas Gourley, age 11, said that Emma “proved to be a Godsend to them, a mother to the younger children and a great help to the ill wife.” There are many stories throughout Emma’s life of her compassion and skill in the medical field.

Emma told how she helped Paul Gourley, age 2: “When we came to a stream, I stopped and took off my shoes and stockings and outer skirt and put them on top of the cart. Then, after I got the cart across, I came back and carried little Paul over on my back. Then I sat down and scrubbed my feet hard with my woolen neckerchief and put on dry shoes and stockings.”

A most fitting tribute to Emma was a journal entry made by her first husband, John Lee, while on their honeymoon, calling her a “kindhearted, industrious, and affectionate wife. ... She covenanted to follow me through Poverty, privation, or affliction to the end of her days and I believe that her intentions are real and her integrity true.” When John Lee died and before she remarried, Emma stayed with the Gourley family for a time in Goshen, Utah.

Sources: Gourley family histories; Emma Batchelor Lee French family records (for more information on Emma’s remarkable and difficult life, see http://www.wadhome.org/wikiwad/Emma_Louise_Batchelor); interviews with Gourley descendants by Jolene Allphin indicate the continuing friendship and support for Emma.

Note:

The book, *Emma Lee*, by Juanita Brooks, is a wonderful book with good information about Emma’s life, but it is unreliable for Emma’s Martin handcart company experience. It contains several errors that should not be perpetuated. (See endnote 1 in “Ellison Jap Gourley” biography, Martin company section of *Tell My Story, Too*, 8th edition, for examples.)