

MARGARETTA UNWIN CLARK

Born: 1828 England

Age: 28

Martin Handcart Company



One day while returning from her work in a Nottingham factory, Margaretta was attracted by a street meeting. She said the preacher dressed more like a laborer in his best, his manner different, the subject matter different, and all had a magnetic power to her soul.

She “hugged to her heart” the newfound truth with such fervor that her mother, Mary, and her sisters Ann, Mary Ann, and Eliza all espoused the revealed religion of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They all remained true to it throughout their lives.

Margaretta was also responsible for Mary Ann Biddle Farmer in the Hunt wagon company becoming a member of the Church and thereby in this emigration. Mary Ann’s parents had both died when she was a small girl and she was placed in an orphanage. “While there, a young girl (only three years older than Mary Ann) by the name of Margaretta Clark walked by the orphanage every day and would sometimes stop. Finally, Margaretta asked her parents if Mary Ann could come live with them, to which the Clarks consented.” (See story of Mary Ann Biddle Farmer in Hunt company section of *Tell My Story, Too*.)

The day after her twenty-eighth birthday, Margaretta sailed down the Mersey River on the first fragment of her trip to Zion. “For days and weeks they wandered on the waves. She was lashed to the rigging in the brow of the ship that she might experience the full rise and dip of the waves so she could overcome the sea sickness more quickly.”

While crossing the plains, Margaretta felt terrorized by the Indians, at one time meeting over a thousand of them. Large buffalo herds interfered with their travels. Some days they suffered for water. Other days they waded the rivers and slept in wet clothing. Rations were cut and winter came early. By the end of October, Margaretta was among the survivors who were camping in deep snow without food, almost without fire, and too sick and weak to care for each other or dig graves when the rescuers from Salt Lake finally reached them.

Margaretta became a passenger in the wagon of rescuer Anson Call whom she married two months later. Their son, Willard Call, in a history of his mother, wrote:

While the loads were being arranged, ... Margaretta waited in Anson’s wagon gnawing at a frozen squash which had been intended for his horses. When [Anson] saw the situation through the back of the wagon he knew that [she] was freezing to death. In his rough venacular, acquired in the West, he told her of her condition and she replied: ‘Oh no Sir, I have been quite cold but I am comfortable now.’ When he took her by the hand she said, ‘Hold on Sir, my hand is a bit sore, you hurt it.’ As she struggled he said, ‘I calculate to hold on,’ and she landed in the snow. With the help of another man he ran her up and down in the snow to induce circulation and so saved for himself a wife who later bore him six children. Father told us that he knew she had passed the suffering point in a freezing death and if left to herself her mortal life would soon be a thing of memory, but mother always maintained that a gentleman from England would have been much more gentle and not so persistent.

Another descendant wrote:

“Margretta had many pioneering experiences during her thirty-three years of marriage. The first of her six children was born along the river bottoms near Provo on May 28, 1858, while the family was there in exile during the evacuation caused by the arrival of Johnston’s army. Trained in nursing, she was much in demand to administer to the needs of the sick. She was a faithful church worker and a steady supporter of her busy and much-respected husband. Margretta died in December 1908, in Bountiful, Utah.” (Oaks)



Anson and Margaretta Clark Call

Sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files, “Life Sketch of Margaretta Unwin Clark Call,” by Willard Call; *50 PIONEERS: The Pioneer Ancestors of Dallin Harris Oaks and June Dixon Oaks*, by Dallin H. Oaks, June 1997.