

## GEORGE W. PADLEY

Born: 28 Dec 1835 (Died in Martin's Cove)

Age: 20

Martin Handcart Company

George Padley's feelings at the beginning of his handcart trek from Iowa and Nebraska may have echoed that of fellow traveler, Samuel Openshaw, of the same age in the company:

We started about 7 o'clock this morning and traveled through a beautiful country, where we could stand and gaze upon the prairies as far as the eye could see, even until the prairies themselves seemed to meet the sky on all sides, without being able to see a house. I thought, how many thousands of people are there in England who have scarce room to breathe and not enough to eat. Yet all this good land is lying dormant, except for the prairie grass to grow and decay.

George had come from the same area in England as his sweetheart and fiancé, Sarah Ann Franks, who was also in the Martin handcart company. He had worked near there (in Nottingham) as a tailor. Sarah and George were waiting until they reached Utah to be married for time and all eternity in the Endowment House. Their plans were cut short, however, when George died from exposure and pneumonia. He was among those who carried others across the icy North Platte River on October 19, 1856. Fellow traveler, John Jaques, wrote of this:

On the 19th of October the company crossed the N. Platte River for the last time. That was a bitter cold day. Winter came on all at once, and that was the first day of it. The river was wide, the current strong, the water exceedingly cold and up to the wagon beds in the deepest parts, and the bed of the river was covered with cobble stones. Some of the men carried some of the women over on their backs or in their arms. . . . The company was barely over when snow, hail and sleet began to fall, accompanied by a piercing north wind.

George had also taken his turn staying up nights guarding the cattle. With the shortened rations and severe exposure, he became very ill. On November 4, George was likely carried by others across the Sweetwater and into Martin's Cove for shelter. Just prior to his death at this place, George approached Mary Taylor, a 31-year-old widow in the company and said, "Mary, I feel so weak. Will you make me a little gruel?" She said that she would, but her feet were frozen so badly that the captain of their group insisted that George get his own fuel to make enough fire to prepare the meal. George did gather the fuel and Mary made him some gruel. George drank it and retired to bed and died sometime during that night. (See Jesse Taylor story in *Tell My Story, Too*.)

Sarah Ann could not bear the thoughts of George's body being placed in a shallow grave and subjected to the depredations of the wolves. She left behind her warm paisley shawl in which George's body was wrapped and hung in a tree for protection, to await a proper burial in the spring and a glorious resurrection at some time in the future.

The book *Remember* by the Riverton Wyoming Stake states that President James E. Faust was told this story during a visit to Martin's Cove and was very moved by it. With a tear in his eye he said it had to be one of the great love stories of the western migration. (See Sarah Franks story in this *Tell My Story, Too*.)

Other Sources: British Mission Record for *Horizon*; excerpt from audiotape interview of Kim McKinnon with Kathleen Thacker, transcript courtesy Donna Olsen, Riverton, Wyoming, email 2012; "Biography of Jesse Soar Taylor: Came to Utah in 1856," by Ethel Taylor Page, his daughter, courtesy Taylor family; "Autobiography of Mary Ann Barton Allen," <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jleatham/maryAnn.htm>; Interview by Jolene Allphin with Dale Mackay of Provo, Utah (Dale said: "Sarah's mother gave her the shawl when she left England."); *Remember*, Riverton Wyoming Stake; *Descendants of Thomas Mackay – Utah Pioneer*, volume I, 1964; see *More Than Miracles*, by T.C. Christensen and Jolene S. Allphin, *Deseret Book*, 2012, for more information and in-depth documentation on Sarah Franks and George Padley, especially as depicted in the T.C. Christensen's movie, *17 Miracles*.

(For representative painting of George Padley, see [www.tellmystorytoo.com/fine-arts/julie-rogers/the-river-was-wide](http://www.tellmystorytoo.com/fine-arts/julie-rogers/the-river-was-wide).)