

## SARAH FRANKS



Born: England

Age: 24

Martin Handcart Company

Sarah Franks was born May 9, 1832, at Sheephead, Leicestershire, England, to Joshua and Sarah Stanley Franks, the fifth of nine children. She was not able to receive much education as she had to work at a young age to help support her family.

At the age of 16 years, Sarah heard the preaching of the Mormon Elders and made the decision to be baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She was baptized by Elder Henry Allgood in April of 1848. Her parents were unhappy about this decision at the time, especially her father, and she had to leave home for a time. Sarah's family was also converted, however, and followed her example at a later date. Sarah's father died in 1853 in England. Her mother and three sisters emigrated from England to Utah some years after Sarah.

It is said that Sarah was a "very attractive" girl "with dark curly hair and dark eyes." Ambitious, enthusiastic, and full of faith, she left England with her fiancé, George Padley, and good friend, Ann Malin, in May 1856. Sarah and George were postponing their marriage until they reached Salt Lake City, determined to wait to receive their endowments and eternal sealing in Salt Lake City. Sarah and George subsequently left Iowa City, Iowa, with the Martin handcart company while Ann joined the Hunt wagon company which followed close behind and where she was employed as a cook. Sarah and George were known as the "sweethearts" of their company as they traveled along, doing much talking and planning of their future home in the Valley.

During the journey, Sarah became so weak and ill with chills and fever that she collapsed and had to be dug out of a snowdrift, reportedly by Thomas Dobson, an 18-year-old boy in the Martin company. George was also very ill, having sacrificed much for Sarah and others in the company. George developed pneumonia and died at Martin's Cove. Sarah took her long-fringed shawl that her mother had given her as she left England from her own cold body and had the brethren wrap George's body in it and suspend it from a tree. Here it would be protected from wolves and buried by others later when a deep enough grave could be dug. In the 1990's, President James E. Faust of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints visited Martin's Cove. He was very moved when he was told the love story of Sarah Franks and George Padley. With a tear in his eye he said it had to be one of the great love stories of the western migration.

One of Sarah's several biographies written by descendants says that another of Sarah's friends died on the plains, leaving a little boy, who Sarah promised to bring on and care for. The friend and boy are not named. This would have likely been earlier in the journey, as Sarah was too ill later to have cared for anyone else.

It is said that Sarah was overwhelmed with disappointment upon finally witnessing the Salt Lake Valley. She was sent to the home of Jacob Butterfield, located at a place west of the Jordan River where the Cottonwood Creek empties into it. Here she received care and nursing for a short time. One day a neighbor, Ann Mackay, was making a regular Relief Society visit at the Butterfield home and met Sarah for the first time. Upon hearing of her illness and trials in the handcart company, she took Sarah to her own home for continued care and nursing. The following year Sarah became the third wife of Ann's husband, Thomas Mackay. These three wives and their children worked hard, loved and served each other and are said to have had very successful relationships.

(Sarah Franks - Page 2)

Sarah often took her freshly churned butter, packed in a basket of fresh cool grass or leaves, into Salt Lake City to regular customers, walking 8 miles each way. She washed, carded and spun wool from their sheep, making quilts and clothing during the winter months.

Sarah's husband died when their youngest of 9 children was only 6 years old. Thomas Mackay had been a well respected and prosperous farmer and stock raiser, an influential citizen and stalwart member of the Church and community. Sarah's children and grandchildren remember that she often told them of how hungry she became crossing the plains and said, "Waste not shall want not." They also said of her:

"She was wise, prudent, and shared herself with all, having the capacity to bring herself down to the level of each little child, understanding his feelings and well being. Her birthday parties are well remembered. She could hardly endure to see a little child wait for his elders to finish eating before his own appetite would be appeased, but would give out to any little one near her some little goodie from the table. It might be a chicken leg or a piece of cake or cookie, whichever she could manage at the time. Her visits were looked forward to with great delight. Her grandchildren could hardly wait to return home from school on such occasions. She was particularly interested in each child, and in greeting them she would raise up her hands and say, "Good Luck-a-daisy! You are growing so big," or "You are getting prettier each time I see you," and then give a hug and kiss to each one. She always made one feel happy to be near her. One of the joys of her visits was prevailing upon her to cook, using her special English recipes.

She set us a wonderful example of loving one another. And sometimes as children often do, we would have our childish disputes, [and] she would always say, "Blessed are the peacemakers." And we knew what that meant. No other words were needed. . . . She would sing the old handcart song, "For some must push and some must pull as we go marching up the hill; So merrily on our way we go until we reach the Valley O." As she spoke of her past, she never gave the impression that she would change any part of her life if it were possible to do so. . . . God bless her memory. She died January 31, 1911, at the age of seventy-nine years, and was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery."

Another granddaughter wrote:

"She was especially admired and loved for her thoughtfulness of little children. She always had a surprise awaiting them when they called to see her. She would always bring us a little gift, such as a pretty little china cup and saucer, a little toy, or a box of lovely assorted cookies. Whenever we left her home after a visit with her she would always give us some food to eat on the way should we become hungry. We always remember the large pockets in her long skirts and in her aprons where we could always find some nice candy or a cookie. She was dearly loved by all. Every memory we have of her—every thought and action—was a pleasant one."

The following are excerpts from Sarah's patriarchal blessing, given by Patriarch Archibald Frame when Sarah was in her later years:

"The Lord is pleased with you in accepting the Gospel in your native land and for the sacrifice that you have made in leaving your native land, kindred and friends and gathering here to the bosom of the Church. For the patience and perseverance in the trials and privations you have had to pass through in order to accomplish this end. And inasmuch as your desire is to serve him even as you have done in the past in keeping his laws and commandments He still will bless you and smile upon you. . . . Your posterity shall be numerous and they shall rise up in your declining years and call you blessed. Your name shall be had in honorable remembrance amongst the mothers in Israel as a Daughter of Sarah. . . . I bless you that your last days may be your best days upon this earth with the Spirit of the Lord that it may comfort and sustain you in every trial and give you strength to acknowledge His hand in all things you have to pass through. I bless you that you may go forth and receive the Ordinances that await you in the house of the Lord. Your inheritance shall be upon Mount Zion."

Sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; 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; Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website. 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*.

