

AMY BRITWELL LOADER

Born: 1802 England

Age: 54

Martin Handcart Company



Amy Loader



Tamar Loader (Ricks)

James and Amy Loader came to America first in 1855. James had worked in England as foreman and head gardener for a wealthy gentleman by the name of Sir Henry Lambert. James and Amy's four sons and nine daughters were all born on this estate where James had worked for 35 years. Somewhere around 1850, the Loaders joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and James was fired from his job as a consequence. In November 1855, they left for America on the *John J. Boyd* with at least six of their unmarried children. Their oldest daughter, Ann (Dalling), had already emigrated with her husband and was awaiting their arrival in Utah.

The Loader family first went to Williamsburg, New York, where they worked for a time. Even their daughter, Sarah, who was not yet twelve, worked as a nursemaid in the home of a wealthy family by the name of Sawyer. They left in June of 1856 and traveled to Iowa where they joined with their daughter, Zilpah, her husband, John Jacques, and their one-year-old daughter, Flora. Zilpah was expecting another baby, which was born on the plains in August. Amy's granddaughter, Flora, did not survive the trek. She died about a week before reaching the Valley. One family record indicates two sons coming to America, but only 10-year-old Robert is listed with the Company.

James Loader died, fairly early in the trek, (Sept. 27 of diarrhea), leaving his wife and daughters to finish the trek alone. The rest of them survived the trek, experiencing many miracles amid their tribulation. James had been faithful and courageous in defending his new faith. One of his greatest wishes was to see his daughter, Ann, in Zion. Surely the Lord granted James this blessing of witnessing his entire family in Zion.

Amy was a very strong woman who protected, sustained and cheered her children, as well as others, without complaining. She always manifested great faith in God. She put on all the extra clothing she could carry under her own, so when the children needed dry clothing, she always had it, including dry stockings for them after fording streams. As the weather became colder and provisions shorter, they were given 4 ounces of flour a day for each person. Instead of the usual gruel, Mother Loader made hers into little biscuits and would have them through the day, thus having a bite or two for the children when they were tired and faint.

One day, a man lying by the roadside, when asked to get up, said he could not, but if he had a mouth full of bread he could, so Amy gave him some food and he got up and went on. In Salt Lake some time later, this man stopped Amy and thanked her for saving his life.

After one exceptionally cold night, Amy (whose health was also very fragile), could not get her daughters to arise. She finally said, "Come girls, this will not do. I believe I will have to dance to you and try to make you feel better." Amy struggled to her feet, hair falling about her face as she filled the air with song. Louder and louder she sang, her wasted frame swaying as finally she danced, waving her skirts back and forth. The girls laughed and momentarily forgot their frozen toes and snow-covered blankets, as their mother danced and sang and twirled until she stepped on an icy patch and fell in a heap to the ground. Then "... in a moment we was all up to help our dear Mother up for we was afraid she was hurt. She laughed and said, 'I thought I could soon make you all jump up if I danced to you.' Then we found that she fell down purposely for she knew we

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would all get up to see if she was hurt. She said that she was afraid her girls was going to give out and get discouraged and she said that would never do to give up.”

Amy’s daughter, Tamar, was very much grieved when she left England because she had been unable to convert her sweetheart and he remained. One night, while on the plains, after much grieving, she had a dream. The next morning she told her mother that she had dreamed that her sweetheart came and stood beside her and he seemed so real. But he was not alone. Another man was with him . . . In the dream the sweetheart finally faded away but the other man remained. When Tamar first saw Thomas E. Ricks in the rescue party, she took her mother by the arm and said, “Mother, that’s the man.” She did marry Thomas Ricks (after whom Ricks College, now BYU Idaho, was named).

Amy’s daughter, Patience, relates that one day as she was pulling the handcart through the deep snow a strange man appeared to her: “He came and looked in my face. He said, ‘Are you Patience?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘I thought it was you. Travel on, there is help for you. You will come to a good place. There is plenty.’ With this he was gone. He disappeared. I looked but never saw where he went. This seemed very strange to me. I took this as someone sent to encourage us and give us strength.” (The Loader family was met by rescuers at camp that night.)

After arriving in the Valley, Amy went to Pleasant Grove to the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Amy and John Dalling. She remained there until her death in 1885 at the age of 83. Her descendants have written of her, “Amy Britnell Loader protected, sustained and cheered her children and others without complaining and manifested great faith in God.” Her son-in-law, John Jaques, wrote: “His [James Loader’s] chief solicitude was for his wife, who, he feared, would not be able to endure the journey. But she did endure it. She endured it bravely, although it made her a sorrowing widow. She has lived a life of usefulness to the present time, yet still a widow, for she could never believe there was a man left in the world equal to her husband.”



Patience Loader and her sisters at Salt Lake Temple Dedication. Seated: Patience Loader Rozsa Archer, Ann Loader Dalling Paul. Standing: Sarah Loader Harris Holman, Zilpah Loader Jaques, Tamar Loader Ricks, Maria Loader Harris.

Photo courtesy of Loader descendants serving as missionaries at Martin’s Cove, 2012.

See *Recollections of Past Days: The Autobiography of Patience Loader Rozsa Archer*, edited by Sandra Ailey Petree, Utah State University Press, Logan, Utah, 2006, 162. (This book is now available online.)

Sources: *Life history and writings of John Jaques including a diary of the Martin Handcart Company*, by Stella Jaques Bell, 1978; *Recollections of Past Days: The Autobiography of Patience Loader Rozsa Archer*, edited by Sandra Ailey Petree, 2006. portions available at Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel online database.