

# William Bleasdale and Margaret (Moss) Bleasdale



## A Family History

by Shelley Dawson Davies

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## Chapter 1

# Convictions

## A Family Divided

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*Beacon Fell near Barton, Lancashire, where Margaret Moss was born in 1798.*

At the north-east edge of England's Lancashire County is a vast landscape of moorland known as the Forest of Bowland, traditionally a royal hunting ground overseen by a small number of aristocratic landowners. A scattering of market towns and small villages gradually formed in the countryside near the forest as the upper class expanded their farmlands, renting them to tenant farmers who worked the fields with hired labor. Even as the Industrial Revolution transforming England with factories and refineries, life remained unchanged in this agricultural region, its fields and pastures producing a lucrative living for the gentry and the middle-class farmers like Robert Moss,<sup>1</sup> who managed the estates.

Robert had done well for himself over the years, acquiring sufficient wealth to live in a grand home with servants.<sup>2</sup> His wife<sup>3</sup> bore him twelve children during their marriage, eight sons and four daughters who were carefully groomed to fit into society and bring honor to the family. It was important to know one's place in the scheme of things, to give proper deference and respect to one's betters, and not mingle with those of the lower class, even in the country village of Newton where the Moss family lived. Margaret,<sup>4</sup> the oldest daughter and namesake of her mother, spent her days learning the gentile feminine

traits and good manners required of her station. Margaret was content to live a privileged life similar to the Jane Austen characters she may have read about until she did the unthinkable by falling in love with one of the family's servants.



*William and Margaret were married at the parish church, St. Mary the Virgin, in Goosnargh.*

## Social Disgrace

William Bleasdale<sup>5</sup> was a strong and handsome twenty-four year old when he was granted the position of coachman for the Moss family. It was a step up for the young man, who had been supporting himself since he was orphaned as a child. William may have been “of plain people,”<sup>6</sup> but he was charismatic and charming enough to convince Margaret to give up the fortunate life she was born to. Much to the horror of her family, Margaret became William’s wife at the Goosnargh parish church in September, 1820.<sup>7</sup>

William brought Margaret back to his home village of Thornley, ten miles south of Newton, where their first child, Alice,<sup>8</sup> was born nine months later, in June, 1821. Two more daughters followed: Mary<sup>9</sup> in November, 1823, and Jeanette,<sup>10</sup> in February, 1826. William found it difficult to support his family, and it eventually became necessary to hire out the children. Jeanette was sent to work on a nearby farm when she was only nine years old.<sup>11</sup>

One day when Jeanette was young, Margaret asked her little girl if she would like to visit her Grandmother Moss. Jeanette had wondered many times why she had never seen her grandmother. She was dressed in her best and given directions to a large, beautiful home. The door was opened by the butler, who asked what she wanted. Jeannette replied, "I want to see my grandmother." She was told to wait and soon a lady came to the door. "Whose little girl are you?" she asked. When Jeannette told her, her grandmother replied, "Your mother wants you. You had better run home." It was the only time she ever saw her grandmother. When Jeanette asked her mother why she had been treated that way, she was told the story about her mother running away from the big house to marry the coachman. Her parents never forgave her for marrying beneath her social position.<sup>12</sup>

## Seeking Spiritual Riches

As much as Robert and Margaret Moss were indignant over their daughter's marriage, they must have been completely distraught when two of their sons and several grandchildren left the Anglican church to join a strange new religion from America.

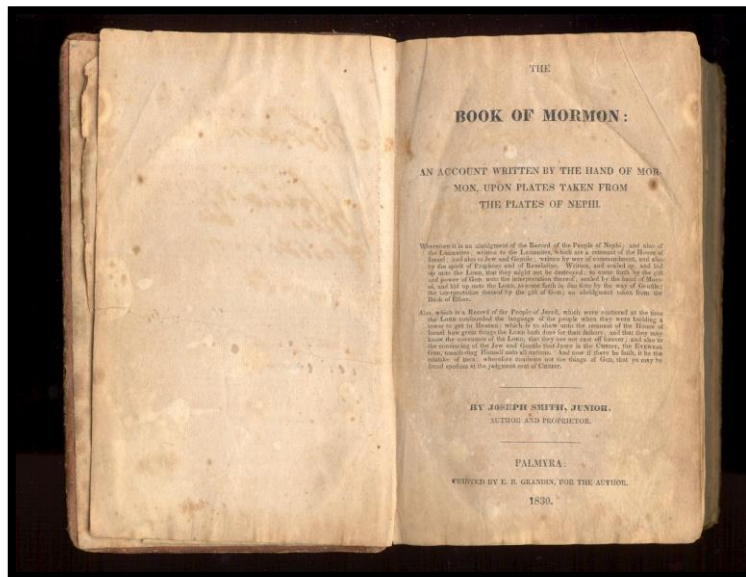
Four missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints arrived at Preston in July, 1837, ready to bear witness that God had restored the fullness of His gospel to the earth through his prophet, Joseph Smith. As Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Willard Richards and Joseph Fielding came into town, they noticed a large election banner hung over the street, proclaiming in large gold letters, "The Truth Will Prevail." With a cry, the missionaries said, "Amen! Thanks be to God! Truth *will* prevail!" The men arranged to preach at a local churches in Preston and surrounding villages, where they taught and bore testimony of the first principles of the gospel.<sup>13</sup>

John and Ellen Parker attended one these meetings near their home in Chaigley, after which they were baptized, along with most of their children, including John Junior, Roger,<sup>14</sup> Alice, Ellen and Mary.<sup>15</sup> Elders Kimball, Hyde, Richards and Fielding continued onward through Lancashire, establishing branches of the church in dozens of towns, among them Thornley, Clitheroe and Waddington, where the Moss and Bleasdale families lived.

Margaret's brother David Moss<sup>16</sup> was immediately touched by the spirit as he listened to Elder Joseph Fielding, accepting baptism 6 January, 1838.<sup>17</sup> He was followed soon afterwards by his brother William.<sup>18</sup> Their oldest brother Hugh,<sup>19</sup> a warden<sup>20</sup> in the local parish

church in Slaidburn, Newton, refused to join, but his sons Robert<sup>21</sup> and John<sup>22</sup> were baptized by their uncle David.<sup>23</sup> William and Margaret Bleasdale were among the first to be baptized in the village of Thornley.<sup>24</sup> Their oldest daughter Alice had been baptized with her husband Roger Parker in Clitheroe, and Mary and her husband John Parker may have also been baptized before her untimely death in 1848.<sup>25</sup>

The Saints, as members called themselves, met together in each other's homes for Sunday services. The Bleasdales opened their humble home in Thornley for meetings,<sup>26</sup> as did the Parkers in Chaigley,<sup>27</sup> hosting the missionaries as they travelled through the area preaching and strengthening their fellow members. There were several thousand members in the area by 1840, when church leaders announced a local printing of *The Book of Mormon* and *The Millennial Star*, a monthly publication dedicated to informing English members and encouraging their immigration to church headquarters in Nauvoo, Illinois.



*An early edition of The Book of Mormon.*



*The Millennial Star encouraged the Saints to gather in the United States and often published instructions for immigration.*

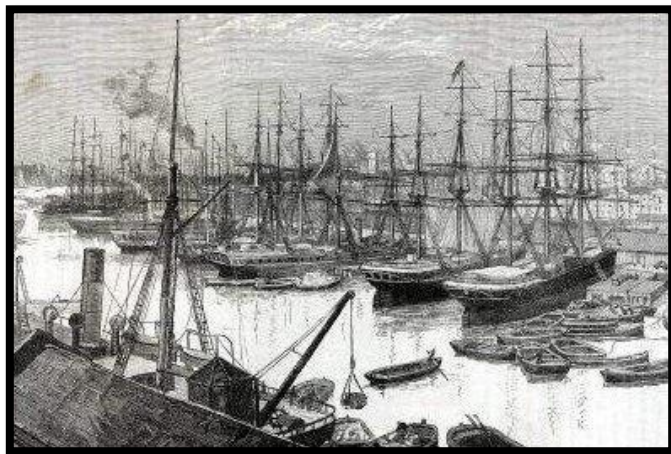
## The Call to Gather

Since immigrating required both a recommend from local church leaders and enough money for passage, it could take some time before a family was ready to leave England for Nauvoo. John and Ellen Parker were fortunate enough to be assigned to the first ship chartered by the church to bring the Saints from Europe in September, 1840,<sup>28</sup> but were unable to take their only unmarried child, seventeen-year old Mary.<sup>29</sup>

Mary Parker and William and Margaret Bleasdale's fourteen-year old daughter Jeanette were friends as well as sisters-in-law, so it was only natural for the Bleasdales to include Mary in their own immigration plans. The Bleasdales saved every penny in addition to selling all their possessions to raise enough cash for their passage, but in the end, there was not enough money for everyone to go. It was reluctantly decided that Jeanette should stay behind in England with one of her uncles until she could earn her own passage.<sup>30</sup> A fellow church member, George Rhodes, offered to pay Mary's way.<sup>31</sup>



All was ready by December, 1840, and the Bleasdales, accompanied by Mary Parker and George Rhodes, made their way to Liverpool where they were scheduled to join a church-led emigrant group. The four travelers “put up at a tavern for the night, expecting to go on board a ship the next day,” recalled Mary, but the “next morning Brother Bleasdale learned from the man with whom he had engaged our passage one week before that he intended to charge us for the same each ten shillings more than we had engaged to pay. To this Brother Bleasdale would not agree and left the ship.”<sup>32</sup> William arranged for passage aboard the *Alliance*, a New York bound ship scheduled to sail in eleven days’ time.



*Sailing ships line the docks at Liverpool.*

## A Turn of Bad Luck

The Bleasdales and Mary passed their time in Liverpool by attending a series of lectures delivered by Elder John Taylor and striking up friendships with other emigrating Saints. The day before the *Alliance* was to sail, George Rhodes was robbed of all his money, funds all four travelers were depending on to take them to Nauvoo. “This brought a change upon our future prospects,” said Mary. “He had promised to defray our expenses from New York to Nauvoo, but now our hopes were plighted. Sister Bleasdale says, ‘Mary, the ship will sail in the morning what shall we do?’ I replied, ‘Our passage is paid, our provisions are on board, let us go to New York. The Lord is just as able to sustain us there as he is if we should remain here, and so long as we walk uprightly before him we shall have no cause to fear, for he has promised that he will never forsake those who put their trust in him.’”<sup>33</sup>

The stranded party renewed their trust in the Lord and boarded the *Alliance* on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, 1840. “About ten o’clock we drew anchor and set sail. It was with feeling of no ordinary kind that I took a last look upon my native shore which was now fast fading away in the distance,”<sup>34</sup> said Mary, a feeling that was no doubt echoed by William and Margaret. Later that evening, both Mary and Margaret Bleasdale found themselves seasick, a condition which caused them to refuse the Christmas pies and puddings distributed among the passengers. The five week voyage was otherwise uneventful, and as the ship pulled into New York’s harbor, the Bleasdale’s were thankful for the Lord’s protection.

Even though none of the Bleasdale party had money enough to continue westward, they were not left completely without resources in New York City. A small branch of the church had been established there, headed by leaders whose job it was to help immigrating Saints navigate their way through the dangers of the big city and make arrangements for their travel to Nauvoo. William, Margaret and Mary spent several years working in New York before they were able to continue on to Illinois.



*New York City along the East River in the 1840s.*

## The Rest of the Family

*Members of the Bleasdale, Moss and Parker families gradually made their way to America as opportunity afforded.*

### *The Parker Siblings:*

*Roger and Alice (Bleasdale) Parker immigrated to Delaware County, Pennsylvania between 1841 and 1843, where they remained until their moved to Pepin, Wisconsin fifteen years later. In their later years, the Parkers moved to Dodge, Kansas, eighty miles northwest of the Mormon Trail outfitting center of Council Bluffs. Their names are not shown on any LDS passenger list, and may not have been associated with the church after leaving England.*

*John Parker Jr. left for Nauvoo in 1845, after his first wife's death. He remarried in Nauvoo and followed the Saints to Salt Lake City in 1852.*

*Alice (Parker) and her husband Edward Corbridge boarded a ship for New Orleans in 1846, eventually joining John Jr. and other LDS families immigrating to Utah in 1852.*

*Ellen (Parker) and William Corbridge sailed for New Orleans on a different ship than Alice and Edward in 1852, moving on to Utah the following year, in 1853.*

### *The Moss Men:*

*Hugh's son John Moss left England 1841. He married in Illinois and moved his family to Salt Lake City in 1848.*

*David Moss immigrated 1843. After serving in the Mormon Battalion, David entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1848, where he married and raised a family.*

*William and his nephew Robert left Liverpool together for New Orleans in 1851. While William remained in Salt Lake City, Robert settled in Bountiful, Utah, where he married in 1852.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Robert Moss (1774-1845), #L8QW-HWY, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) where verification of all vital dates can be found. Also see family group sheets at [www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com](http://www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com)
- <sup>2</sup> Dora G. Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>3</sup> Margaret (Kelisall) Moss (1771-1846), #MQKD-52Z, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>4</sup> Margaret (Moss) Bleasdale (1798-1877), #LZXC-NVJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>5</sup> William Bleasdale (1796-1885), #MPGZ-XNX, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) Variants of the name include: Blaesdale, Blaisdell, Blaesdale, Blesdel and Blazedell. This history uses Bleasdale, the spelling of a village fifteen miles north of William's birthplace of Thornley, Lancashire.
- <sup>6</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968.
- <sup>7</sup> Lancashire, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1936; Parish of Goosnargh, Bishop's Transcript, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>8</sup> Alice (Bleasdale) Parker (1821-1905), #LCVQ-KJ9, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>9</sup> Mary (Bleasdale) Parker (1823-1848), #KJDG-HWR, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>10</sup> Jeanette (Bleasdale) Poole (1826-1921), #L412-WYC, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>11</sup> John H. Yearsley, "Jeanette Blaisdell Poole," undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>12</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968.
- <sup>13</sup> Richard L. Evans, "History of the Church in Great Britain," *Ensign*, September, 1971, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/09/history-of-the-church-in-great-britain?lang=eng>
- <sup>14</sup> Roger Parker (1807-1897), #LJLQ-NJJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>15</sup> "Memorandum of Mary Haskin Parker Richards," Mary Haskin (Parker) Richards, #LJLQ-NJJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>16</sup> David Moss (1818-1897), #KWJR-HBT, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>17</sup> "David Moss," David Moss, KWJR-HBT, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>18</sup> William Moss (1796-1872), #K24Y-P65, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>19</sup> Hugh Moss (1794-1861), #L8QW-HH1, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>20</sup> A warden in the Anglican church serves as a lay official who is expected to lead his fellow parishioners by setting a good example and encourage unity in the congregation. Hugh kept in touch with his sons after they immigrated to Utah, sending news and his love by letters. "Hugh Moss History," Hugh Moss, #L8QW-HH1, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>21</sup> Robert Moss (1821-1895), #L7GH-STZ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>22</sup> John Moss (1820-1884), #KW6C-W6L, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>23</sup> "Biography of Robert Moss," Robert Moss #KWJ3-DQ7, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>24</sup> Family researcher Cleo (Hales) Page shows William's baptism took place in 1837, but has no date for Margaret. See: "William Bleasdale-Margaret Moss family group sheet," supplied 1979 by Cleo (Hales) Page. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted.
- <sup>25</sup> Mary was the wife of John Parker (1819-), #LCJG-766, probably a cousin to her sister's husband. [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>26</sup> Maurine Carr Ward, editor, *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), page 224.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, page 5
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>29</sup> Mary Haskin (Parker) Richards (1823-1860), #L687-KSW, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>30</sup> Jeanette probably stayed with her mother's brother William Moss, who was working as a cotton weaver in Preston. William Moss household, 1841, England census, Lancashire County,

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parish of Preston, Class: HO107; Piece: 498; Book: 6; Civil

parish: Preston; County: Lancashire; Enumeration

District: 7; Folio: 16; Page: 28; Line: 3; GSU roll: 306887, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

<sup>31</sup> Ward, *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*,  
page 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, page 60.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, page 61.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

## Chapter 2

# Building the Kingdom

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### Firm in the Faith



*The river road near Farmington, Iowa.*

Nauvoo was a bustling city of almost ten thousand residents when the Bleasdales finally arrived there around 1843. Homes and businesses lined the neat blocked streets, a temple to the Lord was rising on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River, and Sunday meetings were often conducted by the Prophet Joseph Smith himself. But as exciting as Nauvoo was, the Bleasdales had used up their meager funds in travelling to the city, and couldn't afford to live there. Besides, William was a farmer whose skills were more suited to the countryside, and after living in New York City for so long, the country was exactly where the Bleasdales wanted to be. They found a place to live and work in the settlement of Camp Creek, ten miles north of Nauvoo, where they farmed and joined other Saints in worshipping in the local branch of the church.<sup>35</sup>

Two months after her parents left England, fifteen-year old Jeannette departed for America on a ship bound for New Orleans, hoping to catch up to her parents.<sup>36</sup> There had been no word from the Bleasdales since their departure for America, and no one knew where they were. Jeanette pressed onward, assuming she would find her parents in Nauvoo, but they had not yet arrived in the city.<sup>37</sup> Mary Parker's parents were in Nauvoo, "expecting their daughter Mary every day" in June, 1842, however there was still no sign of the Bleasdales.<sup>38</sup> Mary finally joined her parents by the fall of 1843, and moved into their home on the corner of Munson and Durphy Streets,<sup>39</sup> only a few blocks from where Jeannette found work in the home of Joseph Young.<sup>40</sup> Jeanette learned of her parents' whereabouts from Mary,

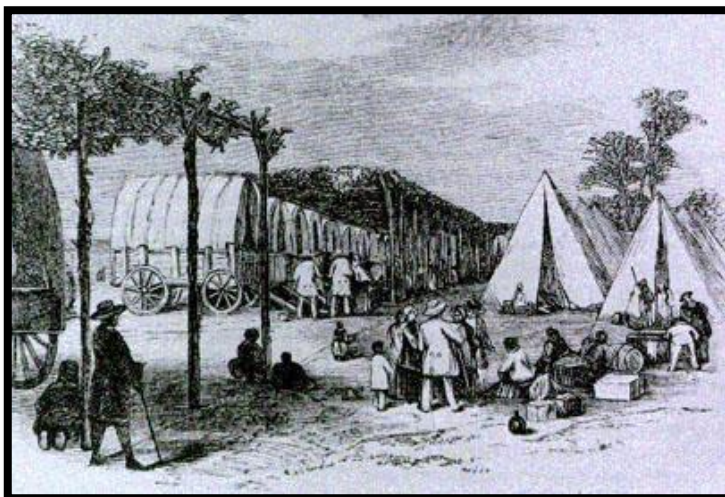
and she may have joined her father and mother in Camp Creek for some time, where she presented her mother with a cow and calf she bought from her savings.<sup>41</sup>

Nauvoo continued to attract great numbers of people, especially new converts from Europe. Such growth threatened to change Illinois in ways the old settlers were unprepared to accept. Not only were the Mormons strange and clannish, but they tended to vote in unison, swaying both local policy and state politics. Suspicious and alarmed non-Mormons used the press to denounce the church in general and Joseph Smith in particular. Sensational articles full of half-truths and lies succeeded in arousing such hatred toward the Prophet that he was eventually charged with riot after ordering an anti-Mormon newspaper destroyed. Joseph, his brother Hyrum and several other church leaders were ordered to appear at a trial in the county seat of Carthage in June, 1844, where they were held at the local jail. On the afternoon of 27 June, the jail was stormed by an armed mob who murdered Joseph and Hyrum.

Anti-Mormon forces celebrated the Prophet's death, hopeful the church would be unable to survive such a catastrophe, but the Saints rallied around their new leader, Brigham Young. As the gathering to Nauvoo continued, so did the persecutions levied against the Saints. Violent attacks on outlying settlements caused church officials to warn members, requesting they move into Nauvoo for protection. William and Margaret Bleasdale may have been among those who heeded the call to abandon Camp Creek in September, 1845.<sup>42</sup>

One of the most important buildings in Nauvoo was the temple, rising above the city on a bluff, where baptisms for the dead were already being performed in the completed basement by 1841. Work on the temple hastened as it became increasingly clear the church's enemies would never allow the Saints to remain in Illinois. Even as plans were underway to move the entire population to a safe location somewhere in the west, efforts were increased to finish the temple. Rooms were dedicated as they were completed, and endowment ordinances administered day and night. Both Jeanette and her mother received their endowments in the Nauvoo temple the same day, 7 February, 1846, four days after Brigham Young led the first wagon train of evacuees across the river into Iowa.<sup>43</sup>





*Mormons camp in Iowa along the route to Winter Quarters, Nebraska, in 1846.*

## Iowa Interlude

Twenty-thousand refugees from Nauvoo streamed across Iowa over the next ten months as the Saints left their homes for temporary camps scattered over the state, beginning with those families who were best prepared for the journey. For some reason Jeanette left Nauvoo without her parents, probably with her friend Mary Parker and the extended Parker family, who reached temporary church headquarters at the Missouri River before winter set in.<sup>44</sup> She no doubt expected her parents to join the Saints at Winter Quarters that year, but when they failed to arrive, she became concerned. Once again, Jeanette found herself separated from her parents, with no idea of where they were.

William and Margaret Bleasdale were among those Saints ill prepared to leave Nauvoo in 1846. They were forced to make the journey in stages, working as they went in order to afford supplies. The Bleasdales made it as far as Farmington, Iowa, thirty-five miles west of Nauvoo, before they stopped at the eighty-acre farm of Micajah and Rebecca Poole, unable to continue any farther. While the Poole's were not Mormons themselves, they took pity on the middle-aged couple, allowing them to set up housekeeping in an old blacksmith shop on the property.<sup>45</sup> William earned a small wage as a farm hand while Margaret helped Rebecca Poole with cooking, laundry and household chores.<sup>46</sup>



The Bleasdales worked hard and saved their wages during the winter of 1846-47, hoping to join the Saints camped along the Missouri River sometime the following summer. They kept in contact with other members of the church waylaid in Iowa, attending Sunday services whenever possible and giving aid to their fellow believers however they could. They became close friends with John Robinson and his wife Bathsheba, English emigrants who lived a few miles away, and when both John and Bathsheba died unexpectedly, William and Margaret adopted two-year old Reuben<sup>47</sup> and raised him as their own child.

Somehow by the spring of 1847, Jeanette learned her parents were living in southeastern Iowa, three hundred miles away. She immediately set out to join them, travelling on foot with nothing more than a loaf of bread and forty cents in her pocket.<sup>48</sup> It took a month to work and walk her way across the state, but it was worth being reunited with her family. There was a joyous reunion when Jeannette finally arrived at the Poole farm, and the young woman joined her mother in the kitchen preparing meals for the farm hands, among them the Poole's oldest son, John.<sup>49</sup> Micajah and Rebecca may have noticed John's interest in Jeanette, hoping it was as temporary as the Poole's stay at their farm. They were shocked and angry when the young couple was married in July, 1848,<sup>50</sup> especially Micajah, who ordered his son and the Bleasdales off his property.

Despite this unfortunate setback in their fortunes, the Bleasdales were as determined as ever to move west, finding employment on another farm until they were financially prepared to leave with a group of Saints headed for the trailhead of Kanesville in the spring of 1850.<sup>51</sup> Joining them were John, Jeanette and baby Mary Elizabeth,<sup>52</sup> born eight months earlier. Sadly, the infant died somewhere along the way, leaving the entire family in mourning by the time they reached Kanesville.

By June, 1850, the Bleasdale and Poole families were finally outfitted for their thousand mile trek across a wild stretch of prairie and desert. William and John each had a wagon, eight cattle and a gun with ample supplies of black powder and lead,<sup>53</sup> plus flour, beans, bacon, corn meal, dried fruit, salt and sugar. They departed for the Salt Lake Valley with the William Snow/Joseph Young Company on the first day of summer<sup>54</sup> with faith in the Lord and high hopes for the journey.

A few days out on the trail many of the company were stricken with cholera, including John, but thanks to a priesthood blessing administered by Joseph Young, he was healed. Others were not so fortunate. The trail was "almost an unbroken succession of burying grounds. Newly made graves met the eye at every step," recalled

fellow immigrant Mary Coray,<sup>55</sup> but eventually the illness subsided among the Saints and they continued on. “It was long and tiresome, occupying four months for its accomplishment, every day bringing with it a new adventure. Now harassed with fear of an attack from the Indian bands that roamed the boundless plains through which our route lay... parched one day by thirst under a scorching sun, and the next drenched by soaking rains. Suffocated by the hot airs of the plains during the day and at night chilled by the cold breath of the mountains: in short, suffering all the chances and mischances of a wandering life in the open air,” said Mary Coray.<sup>56</sup>



*Thousands of buffalo roamed the plains in the 1800s.*

On 17 July the company came across a herd of buffalo “which came quite near the wagons,” and the following day “swarms of buffalo—not less than three thousand,” reported Luke Gallup. “At five p.m. we saw the greatest sight of all. Being on a rise of ground we saw about eight thousand at one view. We saw about fifteen thousand in all this day.”<sup>57</sup> While the buffalo provided fresh meat for the pioneers, the great herds also caused stampedes among the cattle, many of which were lost along the way. The Bleasdales and Pooles eventually lost almost all of their cattle and were forced to yoke up their only a cow to help pull their wagons. They limped along as best as they could, exposed to dusty roads, torrential rain storm and clouds of mosquitos. By September the weather turned cold, leaving frost on the ground every morning, and snow could be seen on the mountain peaks as the company headed into Wyoming. The Saints hurried on to Fort Bridger where they could resupply before trekking the last one hundred miles to the Salt Lake Valley.

The first wagons of the Snow/Young Company rolled into the valley on 1 October, 1850. “I was never happier in my life than the day we arrived in Utah and found peace, although it was a terribly lonesome and desolate looking place,” remembered fellow passenger Elizabeth Smith,<sup>58</sup> a sentiment no doubt shared by the Bleasdales.

## At Home in Centerville

The valley may have appeared desolate at first glance, but Salt Lake City in 1850 was a bustling settlement of log and adobe buildings surrounded by thousands of acres of healthy crops. A number of smaller communities were also prospering as new arrivals sought to spread out from the city, claiming tracks of farmland and pastures for their animals. William was fifty-five years old by this time, but he wasn’t ready to retire. The Bleasdales decided to make their home fifteen miles north of Salt Lake City along Deuel Creek in Centerville, where William established a small farm near the creek, dotted with cottonwood and willow trees.

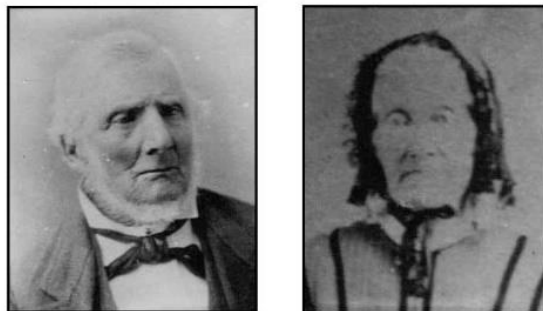
Margaret was content in her log home at the foot of the mountains, spending her days keeping house and tending to little Rueben. She made own her own lye soap, dipped candles, sewed the family’s clothes and made rag rugs and quilts in her spare time at night by the fire. Her days were full with feeding the barnyard animals, collecting eggs, churning butter and preparing William’s garden vegetables to be traded for other supplies. Margaret was kept company by Jeanette and John Porter, who lived next door, and she was overjoyed at becoming a grandmother when Jeanette gave birth to little Adaline<sup>59</sup> in February, 1852.



*An early view of Centerville Canyon along  
Utah’s Wasatch Mountains.*

The Bleasdales joined their neighbors at Sunday services, initially held in turn at member's homes until a meeting house was built in 1855. By then there were over two hundred people living and farming in Centerville, and life had settled into a comfortable routine. Even though most people attended Sunday school and the monthly fast and testimony meeting held on Thursday afternoons, the hard work of eking out a living interfered with diligent attention to religious duties. Soon after the meeting house was built the citizens of Centerville received a visit from Apostle Wilford Woodruff, sent from Salt Lake City to call "home missionaries" tasked with encouraging local families to better live their religion. Members were rebaptized to show their commitment to the gospel and many men were not only encouraged to be sealed to their wives in Salt Lake's endowment house, but to take plural wives as well. William and Margaret were endowed and sealed in March of that year, but it wasn't until 1871 that William was sealed to Hannah Sutter<sup>60</sup> and Mary Kenyon.<sup>61</sup> These were apparently symbolic or short lived marriages, as no other information about Hannah and Mary can be found.<sup>62</sup>

The fervor of the Mormon Reformation prepared everyone living along the Wasatch front for the traumatic event of 1857-58, known as the Utah War. Misunderstandings in Washington, D.C. falsely accused the Mormons of disloyalty against the United States, causing President James Buchanan to dispatch troops to Salt Lake City to put down a supposed rebellion in 1857. News of the army's approach reached Brigham Young in late July; by the first of August, church leaders encouraged members to resist such an unwarranted invasion, calling for families living north of Provo to pack up their belongings and head for points south. Many were willing not only to abandon their hard-won homes and farms, but to burn them before allowing invaders to profit from them in any way. The Bleasdales were among Centerville's residents who moved to Spanish Fork during the evacuation of 1858, remaining in Utah County until the conflict was resolved in 1859. William and Margaret returned to their farm near Duel Creek, but without John and Jeanette Porter, who decided to settle twenty-four miles north in Ogden.



*William and Margaret Bleasdale*

The Bleasdales lived happily in Centerville for the rest of their lives. William provided well for Margaret and Rueben,<sup>63</sup> despite an east wind which leveled the neighbor's barn, and the devastating grasshopper invasion in 1867. Both William and Margaret contributed to the building of the Lord's kingdom by participating in the United Order, a cooperative movement which required donating any increase of material wealth for the greater good, and teaming up with other Saints to bring in harvests, sew quilts for the needy and care for families whose men were away on proselytizing missions.

Reuben gradually took over duties on the farm as he came of age, and when he married Alice White<sup>64</sup> in June, 1876, he and his new bride remained in the Bleasdale home to care for his elderly parents. Margaret's health failed less than one year after Reuben's marriage, and she died at home a day before her seventy-ninth birthday on 16 May, 1877. William lived with Reuben and Alice<sup>65</sup> until his own death at the age of eighty-nine in August, 1885. He was buried next to his wife of sixty-five years in Centerville City Cemetery.<sup>66</sup>



*William and Margaret are buried in the Centerville Cemetery, plot A-3-6-7.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>35</sup> Lyman D. Platt, Early Branches of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1850, [http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ3\\_Platt.pdf](http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ3_Platt.pdf) Also members of this branch were John and Mary (Henderson) Dickson and William and Mary Ann (Stoddard) Dickson connected to our family through Ammon Davis, #KWCT-ZP8, and John Hyrum and Susannah (Phillips) Green, connected to our family through Alexander Dawson, #KWZG-7KD.
- <sup>36</sup> Passenger list, Sheffield, Liverpool to New Orleans, 7 February-30 March, 1841, [http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM\\_MII/t:voyage/id:331/keywords:february+1841](http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:voyage/id:331/keywords:february+1841)
- <sup>37</sup> Edna Margaret Porter Hegsted, "Jeannette Bleasdale Poole, Pioneer," undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>38</sup> Maurine Carr Ward, editor, *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), page 6.
- <sup>39</sup> The Parkers were renting a house on the north east corner of Block 120. John Parker entry, Early Latter-day Saints: Remembering the People and Places, <http://earlylds.com/getperson.php?personID=I24756&tree=Earlylds>
- <sup>40</sup> Jeanette Blaisdale entry, Early Latter-day Saints: Remembering the People and Places, <http://earlylds.com/getperson.php?personID=I2644&tree=Earlylds>
- <sup>41</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.
- <sup>42</sup> Platt, Early Branches of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1850, [http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ3\\_Platt.pdf](http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ3_Platt.pdf)
- <sup>43</sup> "John Rawlston Poole-Jeanette Bleasdale family group sheet," supplied 1979 by Cleo (Hales) Page. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted. Also see Margaret (Moss) Bleasdale, #LZXC-NVJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>44</sup> In a letter to her husband Samuel Richards, 1 February, 1847, Mary Parker Richards mentions seeing Sister Jeannette Bleasdale, who "sends her kind respects." Ward, *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*, page 126.
- <sup>45</sup> John H. Yearsley, "Jeanette Blaisdell Poole," undated typescript. Copy held by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City.
- <sup>46</sup> Gwen Berrett Fillmore, Elaine Britton Poole and Fontella Bitton Spelts, editors, *Menan, Idaho 1879-1986* (self-published, 1986) page 382. [https://archive.org/stream/menanidaho18791900spel/menanidaho18791900spel\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/menanidaho18791900spel/menanidaho18791900spel_djvu.txt)
- <sup>47</sup> Reuben Andrew Robinson Bleasdale (1847-1923), #KWCY-WVQ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>48</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. .
- <sup>49</sup> John Rawlston Poole (1829-1894), #KWNK-31C, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>50</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.
- <sup>51</sup> Granddaughter Dora Jensen states the Pooles left Farmington" in company with a few other Saints on 24 May, 1850." See: Dora G. Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies. John, but not Jeanette, is shown as member of the Micajah Poole household in the 1850 U.S. census. All questions answered for the 1850 U.S. census were supposed to refer to the official enumeration day of 1 June. The Micajah Poole household was questioned on 23 October, well after John and Jeanette had departed for Utah. The omission of Jeanette's name from the household may indicate the Poole's unhappiness with their son's marriage. Micajah Poole household, 1850 U.S. census, Lee County, Iowa, Division 28; Roll: M432\_186; Page: 382A; Image: 211, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>52</sup> Mary Elizabeth Poole (1849-1850), #KF4L, ZD3, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

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- <sup>53</sup> Gardner Snow, "Record Book, 1850,"  
<https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=6103>
- <sup>54</sup> William Snow/Joseph Young Company, Kanessville, Iowa, to Salt Lake City, Utah, 21 June-1 October, 1850,  
<http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companyPioneers?lang=eng&companyId=283>
- <sup>55</sup> Mary Ettie Coray, "Reminiscence,"  
<https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=6090>
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>57</sup> Luke William Gallup, "Reminiscences and Diary, May, 1842- March, 1891,"  
<https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=5688>
- <sup>58</sup> Elizabeth J. Bybee Smith, "Utah Pioneer Biographies,"  
<http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=6100>
- <sup>59</sup> Adaline Malinda (Poole) Yearsley (1852-1936), #KWZM-CYD, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>60</sup> Hannah Sutter (-), #LJRT-SPK, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>61</sup> Mary Kenyon (-), #LJRT-S2N, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>62</sup> William was sealed to both women on the same day, 30 August, 1871, when he was seventy-six years old. To date, no other information has been found on Hannah Sutter or Mary Kenyon, whose names do not appear on the Mormon Overland Trail Index or various census, tax or death documents.
- <sup>63</sup> According to the 1860 U.S. census, William's farm was valued at \$350.00 and his personal wealth at \$260.00. William Bleasdale household, 1860 U.S. census, Davis County, Utah, town of Centerville, Roll: M653\_1313; Page: 357; Image: 368; Family History Library Film: 805313, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>64</sup> Alice Mary (White) Bleasdale (1860-1909), #KWCY-WV9, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>65</sup> Reuben R. Bleasdale household, 1880 U.S. census, Davis County, Utah, town of Centerville, Roll: 1336; Family History Film: 1255336; Page: 299D; Enumeration District: 015, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>66</sup> Plot A-3-6-7.

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