

## Chapter Fifteen

# Sarah Giles, Wife #2

Sarah's grandson, T. Earl Pardoe, asked her one day if her life of pioneering and hardship had been worth it. She said in a quiet voice,

*Come here my dear. I was just now thinking of how blessed I have been. Though I left the land of my birth, and most of my kin, I was followed by many of my native countrymen, I was led to the beautiful mountains of Zion, to wed one of God's choicest souls, I lived to see peace and prosperity come to all of us.*

*Every wish I ever expressed, your grandfather gratified. We are all blessed, my dear, and never forget, it is due to God . . . . I will not be with you very long now but every moment of my life has been so happy.<sup>1</sup>*

Sarah was born January 1, 1831, to Thomas and Maria Davis Giles in Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan, Wales. Thomas was a Baptist minister who joined the Mormon faith after hearing the forceful preaching of Dan Jones. Thomas followed the example of his son Thomas D., who first heard the preaching of the Mormon missionaries and was baptized in November 1844. The entire family was baptized soon after. Thomas and Thomas D., who were both colliers (coal miners), loved preaching the newly found gospel.

As soon as Sarah and her family heard the call from the missionaries to leave their homeland and travel to Zion, they desired to go. Her family saved their money and made preparations to depart. Maria, Thomas, Sarah, and Edward traveled to Liverpool where they boarded the ship, *Buena Vista*, on February 26, 1849, with a large group of Welsh immigrants led by Dan Jones.<sup>2</sup> Dan was called the "Father of the Welsh Mission" because of his great success in that country. Sarah's brother Thomas D., who needed to stay in Wales, took over Dan's religious position as Conference President when he left. Most of the Saints in the group were from Sarah's area, the Merthyr Tydfil Conference, which was organized in 1844 and contained six branches of the Church. They set sail to New Orleans and arrived on April 19, 1849.<sup>3</sup>

It appears that Sarah continued her journey to Utah, leaving her parents and brother Edward with the Saints in Council Bluffs. Led by Dan Jones and George A. Smith, Sarah's group of Welsh Saints left Council Bluffs, Iowa, on July 14, 1849, and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley between October 26 and October 30, 1849. This group was among the first foreign speaking pioneers in Utah.



Sarah Giles. Courtesy T. Earl Pardoe, *Lorin Farr. Pioneer*

While still in Wales, Thomas D. had a terrible accident when a piece of coal knocked him in the head and blinded him while he was working. He was blessed, however, with the ability to continue preaching the gospel, which he did throughout Wales until his departure for Zion with his wife Margaret and their two children in 1856, following the rest of the family who had immigrated earlier.<sup>4</sup> Thomas D. eventually became a well-known harpist in Utah.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas, Sarah's father, died in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on November 12, 1851, and was buried there. Maria, age 61, and Edward, age 19, continued on the following spring with the Isaac Bullock Company, arriving in the valley between September 21, and October 3, 1852.

## Settling in Utah

When Sarah and her family arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, they suffered due to a cholera outbreak and cold snowstorms. Sarah had a gift for healing. She went among the sick and mourning, giving aid and comfort. Her cheerfulness and bright smile blessed those who suffered.

Sarah was a pretty girl with snappy brown eyes and a tiny stature, weighing only ninety-five pounds. She must have been a beautiful sight for Lorin Farr to behold when he was called out of his home by someone shouting, "Come see the beautiful girl that is all alone." Seeing her need for employment and living arrangements, Lorin and Nancy welcomed Sarah into their home.

One day when Brigham Young was visiting Lorin in his home, he told him, "Lorin, you own half of Ogden and have plenty of money, I want you to take Sarah as your second wife." Nancy gave her blessing, and Lorin and Sarah were married on July 26, 1851, in Salt Lake City. Sarah's home was next door to Nancy's at 2220 Washington Avenue.<sup>6</sup>

Sarah and Nancy loved each other as sisters. Sarah helped Nancy with all the household duties and the myriad of guests that came to visit Lorin. They remained close throughout their lives. Their children considered themselves full brothers and sisters.

In 1890, Josephine Farr interviewed Sarah and reported:

*Sarah's life was full of sacrifice for others. She was an excellent housekeeper, a fond and devoted wife and mother . . . . She was very prayerful and taught her children to pray. She accepted and carried out the council of her husband. She was economical, careful, neat and industrious.*

*She was a mother of nine children; eight of whom she raised to maturity—all married. Sarah was unobtrusive and led her family in quiet authority. She shunned publicity herself, but smiled at Lorin's prominence. She believed in Lorin fully and his wish was her command.<sup>7</sup>*

Sarah was firm in her beliefs about keeping the Sabbath Day holy. All work was to be done during the week and food for the Sabbath was prepared the day before. Shoes were shined and baths taken in preparation for their day of rest. The Sabbath Day at the Farr home consisted of going to meetings, telling stories, reading, and visiting among the families. Even the dishes were stacked and done on Monday.

Sarah loved to visit with people and could talk for hours. Her grandchildren especially loved her dear Welsh accent. Her daughter Lenora remembers her mother telling her, "Laughter keeps you young."<sup>8</sup>

## Nursing Skills

Sarah was blessed with a gift for administering to the needs of sick families. She was patient and skillful. She could quiet a crying baby and diagnose illness. When Lorin became ill with smallpox during the epidemic of the mid-1860s, Sarah left her children in Nancy's care and went to the quarantined grove where tents were set up for the sick and dying. For many days and nights, she helped Lorin and many others regain their health. This grove is now called Farr Grove.

During the Utah War, Lorin had responsibility for more than three thousand immigrants evacuating to Provo. Because of bad water and lack of a good diet, there was illness in the group. Nancy and Sarah spent their time in Provo nursing the sick so they could return to Ogden after the threat of war was over.

Sarah helped nurse all of the sick children in the Farr household. An especially difficult time for Sarah was when three of Olive's children died of spinal meningitis in May 1866. Because of the disease causing these and other deaths, the Farr family believed in vaccination. Sarah's father had died of cholera on the plains on his journey to Utah. She later became quite successful in treating this ailment.

Bernard White, a friend of the Farr family, tells of how Sarah helped his family. Bernard was called on a mission to the eastern states. He wanted to serve the Lord, but his wife was in very poor health and demanded daily care. Bernard discussed the matter with Lorin Farr, who advised Bernard to make this a matter of fervent prayer and assured him that he would receive an answer.

Bernard shared the story in a testimony meeting in the Ogden Third Ward (as recalled by T. Earl Pardoe):

*He [Bernard] awoke one morning with the entire plan of action and a peaceful spirit of content in his heart. He immediately went over to President Farr and said a motivating dream had filled much of his night and he could go on his mission if Sarah Farr, Lorin's wife, would care for his wife while he was away. Upon hearing of the manifestation, Sarah accepted the nursing request and Bernard White went on his mission. Upon his return from this successful religious commitment, he found his wife in perfect health and his home in excellent condition. He remained ever grateful to Sarah Giles Farr.<sup>9</sup>*

During Sarah's last illness, her sister wives, Nancy, Olive, Mary, and Nicholine, served her. Lorin spent most of the time in prayerful watchfulness. All of Lorin's children came and offered to help however they could. Visitors to the home could not tell which children belonged to which mother. There was a spirit of serenity in the home at the time of her death. Nancy told Sarah several days prior to Sarah's death that she would not be long in joining her. Sarah died at age 61 on February 27, 1892, and Nancy died in September 1892.

The *Ogden Standard* wrote of her death:

*Mrs. Sarah Farr, wife of the Hon. Lorin Farr, died at her residence on Twenty First street yesterday morning. She had been confined to her home for the past eight months and to her bed for six weeks. She was rational to the last,*

knowing her friends and relatives until the closing moments. The family and relatives watched at her bedside through the weary hours during which she suffered.

Mrs. Sarah Giles Farr was born in Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, South Wales, Jan. 1, 1831. She came to the territory in 1849, two years after the pioneers had opened the valley to civilization. In 1850 she married Lorin Farr and has resided in Ogden ever since. She died a faithful Latter Day Saint in full conviction of the principles she had espoused. She leaves her husband and eight children, Joseph, Thomas, Marcus, Winslow Farr, Mrs. Richard W. Taylor, Mrs. Roxana Pidcock, Mrs. Ray Packard, and Mrs. Nora Pardoe.

The funeral service will be held at the residence on Sunday, Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, at 11 a.m. All friends are kindly invited to attend.<sup>10</sup>

It broke Lorin's heart to say goodbye to this smiling Welsh woman who had shared his pioneering and religious life for forty-one years. As she died, she blessed her husband, her "sisters," and her husband's children.<sup>11</sup>

### Family of Thomas Giles and Maria Davis Giles (md. June 9,1806)<sup>12</sup>

Child's Name	Birthdate	Birthplace	Spouse/Death Date
Ebenezer	June 1815	Blanavon, Monmouthshire, Wales	Died June 1815
Mary Ann	March 1817	Blanavon, Monmouthshire, Wales	Died July 1817
Mary <sup>13</sup>	July 3, 1818	Blanavon, Monmouthshire, Wales	Unknown
Thomas D.	Nov. 28, 1820	Monmouthshire, Wales	Margaret Thomas
John D.	1823	Blanavon, Monmouthshire, Wales	Died in 1834. Lived to age 13.
Davies D.	June 1825	Blanavon, Monmouthshire, Wales	Died 1826
Davied Giles	June 1827	Blanavon, Monmouthshire, Wales	Unknown
<b>Sarah (Giles Davies)</b>	<b>Jan. 1, 1831</b>	<b>Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, Wales</b>	<b>Lorin Farr</b>
Edward	April 27, 1833	Llanvabon, Glamorganshire, Wales	Unknown

### Notes

1 Pardoe, *Lorin Farr, Pioneer*, p. 340.

2 Transcribed record of the passengers of the Buena Vista lists the voyage they took in 1849: "Ths. Gies [sic] age 64 collier, Maria, age 57, Edward, age 15, and Sarah age 18 a maid." Records found on "Buena Vista/Hartley Passengers" on <http://home.clara.net/tirbach/HelpPageBuenaVista.html>.

3 Conflicting reports of Sarah and her family's journey to Zion are many. Family sources indicated the following story, which the documentation did not prove: Thomas and Maria, along with only two of their children, Sarah and a sibling, left Wales to trek to Zion. They crossed the plains in the Dan Jones Company, walking almost the entire distance. They left Kanessville, Iowa, on July 14, 1849, and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley between October 16 and October 30, 1849. Sarah's father died on the trek and was buried on the plains. Sarah was 17 years old when she arrived. A few years later, the rest of her siblings, David, Edward, Mary, and Thomas D., came by handcart into the Valley. *Lorin Farr, Pioneer* also gives the notion that both a brother and a sister came with Sarah. One account says that her brother's wife died on the way. The other does not mention a wife. A perusing of the pioneer companies of 1849 does not show any of their names. This is not unusual, as many of their names were left out of the official documentation of the journey. The newly documented story is in the text.

4 Thomas and Margaret, both age 35, traveled with the Edward Bunker Company of Welsh immigrants. On the Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel records, it lists their children as Hyrum Lorenzo, age 6, and Joseph, age 7. Margaret died sometime between the birth of a baby girl named Elizabeth on October 1 and the group's arrival in the Valley on October 12, 1856.

- 5 It is not known when Sarah's other siblings, Mary and David, came to Utah. Family sources such as *Lorin Farr, Pioneer* do indicate, however, that all of her brothers and sisters came to Utah eventually.
- 6 Personal History of Alice Pardoe West.
- 7 Farr, Interview, 1890.
- 8 Pardoe, *Lorin Farr, Pioneer*, p. 2.30.
- 9 Pardoe, *Lorin Farr, Pioneer*, p. 339. 10 *Ogden Standard*, February 27, 1891.
- 11 Pardoe, *Lorin Farr, Pioneer*, pp. 340-41.
- 12 Information comes from the following sources: *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 184J-1868* on [lds.org](http://lds.org) and [www.welshmormonhistory.org](http://www.welshmormonhistory.org). Items found include Thomas D.'s journal, which lists birth and death dates for the family and documents Sarah's journey to Utah. Thomas D. identifies his siblings this way: Sarah Giles Davis, Mary Giles Davis, etc.
- 13 When a baby died, it was common to give the deceased child's name to the next baby of the same sex.

**Death of Mrs. Farr.**

Mrs. Sarah Farr, wife of Hon. Lorin Farr, died at her residence on Twenty-first street yesterday morning. She had been confined to her home for the past eight months and to her bed for six weeks. She was rational to the last, knowing her friends and relatives until the closing moments. The family and other relatives watched at her bedside through the weary hours during which she suffered.

Mrs. Sarah Giles Farr was born in Merthyr Tydvill, Glamorganshire, South Wales, January 1, 1831. She came to the Territory in 1849, two years after the Pioneers had opened the valley to civilization. In 1850 she married Lorin Farr and has resided in Ogden ever since. She died a faithful Latter-day Saint in the full conviction of the principles she had espoused. She leaves her husband and eight children, Joseph, Thomas, Marcus and Winslow Farr, and Mrs. Richard W Taylor, Mrs. Roxina Piddcock, Mrs. Ray Packard and Mrs. Nora Pardoe.

The funeral services will be held at the residence on Sunday, February 28th, at 11 a. m. All friends are kindly invited to attend.

Death notice of Sarah Giles Farr. *Ogden Standard*, Feb. 27, 1892.



Brigham Young June 16 <sup>th</sup> A.D. 1801	Joseph Smith born Dec. 23. A.D. 1805	Heber, G. Hinsdale born June 18 <sup>th</sup> 1801 A.D. 1801
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Births

born in Blaine on Monmouth Shire

Sarah wife of Lorin Farr Daughter of  
Thomas and Maria Giles born in Merthyr Tydfil  
South Wales January the 1<sup>st</sup> A.D. 1831

Joseph son of Lorin & Sarah Farr born in  
Ogden City Weber County Utah Territory  
August the 7<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1852

Thomas son of Lorin and Sarah Farr born in  
Ogden City Weber County Utah Territory  
March the 16<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1854

Marcus son of Lorin and Sarah Farr born  
in Ogden City Weber County Utah Territory  
April the 2<sup>nd</sup> A.D. 1856

Sarah Maria Daughter of Lorin and Sarah Farr  
Born in Ogden City Weber County Utah Territory  
March the 30<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1858

Ropana Daughter of Lorin and Sarah Farr  
Born in Ogden City Weber County Utah Territory  
February the 3<sup>rd</sup> A.D. 1860

Winslow son of Lorin and Sarah Farr  
Born in Ogden City Weber County Utah Territory  
May the 3<sup>rd</sup> A.D. 1862

Rachel Amelia Daughter of Lorin and  
Sarah Farr Born in Ogden City Weber County  
Utah Territory September the 2<sup>nd</sup> A.D. 1864  
~~November~~

Leonorah Daughter of Lorin and Sarah  
Farr Born in Ogden City Weber County Utah  
Territory March the 22<sup>nd</sup> A.D. 1867

Hiram son of Lorin and Sarah <sup>Giles</sup> Farr  
Born February the 15<sup>th</sup> on Tuesday morning  
at 2 o'clock A.D. 1870 in Ogden City Weber Co

Lorin's journal entry of Sarah and family. Courtesy HFN.