

The Handcart Song

Ye saints who dwell on Europe's shore, prepare yourselves for many more
To leave behind your native land, for sure God's judgements are at hand.
For you must cross the raging main before the promised land you gain,
And with the faithful make a start to cross the plains with your handcart.
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.

The lands that boast of modern light, we know are all as dark as night.
Where poor men toil and want for bread, where peasant hosts are blindly led;
These lands that boast of liberty you ne'er again would wish to see,
When you from Europe make a start to cross the plains with your handcart.
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.

As on the road the carts are pulled, 'twould very much surprise the world
To see the old and feeble dame thus lend a hand to pull the same;
And maidens fair will dance and sing, young men more happy than the king,
And children, too, will laugh and play, their strength increasing day by day.

But some will say, "It is too bad, the saints upon the foot to pad,
And, more than that, to pull a load as they go marching o'er the road."
But then we say, "It is the plan to gather up the best of men,
And women, too, for none but they will ever travel in this way."

And long before the valley's gained, we will be met upon the plains
With music sweet and friends so dear, and fresh supplies our hearts to cheer;
And then with music and with song, how cheerfully we'll march along,
And thank the day we made a start to cross the plains with our handcarts.

When you get there among the rest, obedient be and you'll be blessed,
And in God's chambers be shut in judgements cleanse the earth from sin;
For we do know it will be so, God's servant spoke it long ago,
We say it is high time to start to cross the plains with our handcarts.

- *"Songs of the Mormons and Songs of the West"*
from the Archive of Folk Song
Edited by Duncan Emrich
Library of Congress

Come all my good people and listen to my song,
Although it's not so very good, it's not so very long.
And sing tittery-irie-aye, sing tittery-me-o.

Now concerning this strange people, I'm now a-going to sing,
For the way they have been treated , I think it is a sin.
And sing tittery-me-a ye, sing tittery-irie-o.

They've been driven from their homes and away from Nauvoo,
For to seek another home in the wilderness anew.
And sing tittery-me-a ye, sing tittery-irie-o.

Oh, they stopped among the Indians, but they don't deem to stay,
And they'll soon be a-packing up and jogging on their way.
And sing tittery-me-a ye, sing tittery-irie-o.

They made a halt at Council Bluffs, but there don 't mean to stay;
Some feed the cattle rushes, and some prairie hay.
And sing tittery-me-a ye, sing tittery-irie-o.

Oh, of logs we build our houses, of dirt we have for floors,
Of sods we build our chimneys, and shakes we have for doors.
And sing tittery-me-a ye, sing tittery-irie-o.

Now concerning this strange people, I've nothing more to say,
Until we all get settled in some future day,

And sing tittery-irie-aye, sing tittery-me-o.
Now concerning this strange people, I'm now a-going to sing,
For the way they have been treated , I think iHs a sin.
And sing tittery-me-a ye, sing tittery-irie-o.



<http://www.media.utah.edu/UHE/Pictures/p0000087.jpg>

Photograph is of The Handcart reenactment of 1897

BOYHOOD REMINISCENCES OF ABANDONMENT OF NAUVOO.

BY PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

ABOUT the middle of February 1846, I stood as a boy on the bank of the Mississippi river at Nauvoo, Illinois, and anxiously gazed at a long train of wagons crossing the river from Nauvoo to Montrose, upon the ice. This train was led by Presidents Young and Kimball and others of the Twelve.

It was the virtual abandonment of the city of Nauvoo by the Latter-day Saints, it being the commencement of the emigration of our people from that place and from the State of Illinois. There were left only the poor and helpless who did not possess the means to accompany the Twelve, and a few who failed through lack of faith to gather to the west.

At that time there was no definite plan as to the future destiny of the people. There had been vague ideas afloat of Oregon, of Vancouver and of "upper California" as probable places of refuge. The only guide was the more or less undefined plans of the Prophet Joseph Smith of migrating to the west in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.

One circumstance which impressed this scene upon my mind was the fact that my brother John, now the Presiding Patriarch of the Church, but then a boy about 13 years of age, was in the company that crossed the Mississippi on the ice, and I wondered if I should see him again. My widowed mother and the rest of her family, being unable to join this company, were compelled to remain behind. Many of the saints, unable to procure outfits to accompany the westward migration, sought refuge in Iowa and Missouri, some of them going to St. Louis and other cities. Among these were some members of my father's family.

In September of the same year the City of Nauvoo was besieged by the mob who compelled the few remaining saints to flee for their lives. We procured a large flat boat and hastily removed from our home our provisions and clothing into it and towed it across the river landing a short distance below Montrose where we made our camp, with no other shelter than the shade of the trees. Here the family was compelled to remain during the bombardment of the city and its capture by the mob. We could distinctly hear the rattle of the musketry and the booming of the cannon, and for my own part I was in momentary fear, however groundless, of the missiles from the cannon alighting in our camp. Meantime my mother left us in this unsheltered condition to effect the sale of some property for the purpose of raising means to provide an outfit for our emigration to the west. As soon as this could be accomplished she returned and with the help of her brother, Joseph Fielding and others attached to the family, we commenced our journey in pursuit of the camp of Israel, following their trail. At the little town of Bonaparte, in Iowa, we received the word of the surrender of Nauvoo to the mob.

It was at the beginning of this journey that I commenced my career as a teamster. A little past seven years of age I commenced the driving of an ox team across the rolling prairies of Iowa and was so successful that I reached the Missouri river without a single accident or mishap to my team or wagon. It being somewhat late in the fall when we reached Winter Quarters, now Florence, Nebraska, and winter approaching, we made all haste to build log cabins for the shelter of the family while we should remain there. Our cabins were built of cottonwood poles with brush and dirt roofs and ground floors. The walls of these shanties were chinked with pieces of wood that had been hewed to fit the crevices and these then daubed with mud or clay and made fair specimens of the dwellings of nearly all our neighbors. As in all subsequent encampments of the emigrating saints, the camp was laid out with a view to fortifying as much as possible against the attacks of Indians or marauders. For this purpose a stockade was built to protect the camp. The policy of President Young and his people always was to be friendly with the Indians and to observe in our treatment of them absolutely the golden rule. Thus were the saints able to get along peacefully by respecting their rights so that the Indians who had long been accustomed to regard white men as their natural enemies, on becoming acquainted with us, learned to regard us as their friends and were as a rule friendly to us.

My occupation during our sojourn at Winter Quarters, was that of a herd boy, although I took part as opportunity permitted in the cultivation of the soil and the raising of a crop of corn during the summer of 1847. George Mills, a member of the family, accompanied the first pioneer expedition from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake valley, and later in the summer of 1847, Aunt Mercy R. Thompson with her daughter, also James Lawton and Margaret Bryson, who were also connected with the family, left with a company of saints to follow the pioneers, and reached Salt Lake valley in the fall of 1847.

In the spring of 1848, we broke camp at Winter Quarters and started westward under the most adverse and trying circumstances. During the winter of 1846-47 we lost most of our horses by starvation and want of shelter, which greatly diminished our means of travel. On starting out we had to couple two wagons together and draw them with one team, uncoupling them at every hill we had to pull up, taking one wagon at a time, then recoupling them again till the next hill was reached. In this way we arrived at the camp at Elkhorn where the organization of the various companies was effected for the forward journey. It is sufficient to say that "Widow" Smith, by her indomitable energy and perseverance secured more teams, the details of which can not be told here, and was prepared to "roll out" with President Heber C. Kimball's company early in June, 1848. She was attached to Captain Cornelius P. Lott's Fifty of that company. The companies being organized in "hundreds" "fifties" and "tens."

We left our camp at the Elkhorn in June, 1848. To attempt a description of the journey across the plains would be too great a task for a short memoir of this kind. It will be enough to say that all the hardships, toil and fatigue incident to the journey were met with fortitude and resignation. We were happy in the thought that, one day, we would reach a place of safety and of rest, where we would be free from the violence of mobs and persecutions of enemies.

I had the honor of driving a four-ox team on a heavy loaded wagon from Winter Quarters to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, catching the first glimpse of the valley from the top of the "Big Mountain" on the 22nd day of September, 1848, and reaching the Fort on what is known as the Old Fort block, or Pioneer Square, on the following day. This being Saturday we had the pleasure of cleaning up for the Sabbath day's rest, and my mother and her family attended a meeting held in the Bowery in the Old Fort, where we listened to discourses by Presidents Young, Kimball and others of the authorities of the Church, experiencing at the same time a degree of relief, freedom and happiness that we had not known for several years.

DESERET EVENING NEWS WEDNESDAY JULY 24 1907

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045555/1907-07-24/ed-2/seq-4/?words=MORMON+Nauvoo+NAUVOO+Mormon>

THE OMAHA DAILY BEE: MONDAY, JULY 23, 1894.

the bar to Utah's statehood.

When the Mormons were expelled in 1846 from Nauvoo, Ill., says the Boston Advertiser, it was evident to the leaders that if they were to have peace in the development of their religion, they must find a home apart from others, and to find such a home was their object during the time they remained in camp among the Pottawattamies and the Omahas in Missouri. During the war with Mexico the services of a Mormon battalion had been accepted by the government, and these soldiers had been sent across the continent for service in California. The Salt Lake region had attracted their attention. That American civilization would ever reach it seemed almost impossible, and the leaders believed that here they might find their new holy land with its desert and Dead sea, its river Jordan, Mount of Olives, Gallilee lake, and scores of other features of its Asian prototype. The migration to the Salt Lake region was determined upon, and the first detachment of pioneer settlers under the lead of Orson Pratt began the Mormon settlement of Utah on the 23d of July, 1847, and a month later the settlement was formally named the "City of the Great Lake." The migration continued through the year.

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<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99021999/1894-07-23/ed-1/seq-6/;words=Mormons+Nauvoo+Mormon+MORMON>



http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/OTImages&CISOPTR=63

Diary entry

"The general impression given by Salt Lake City is an agreeable one. The streets divide the town into ten-acre blocks: they are all 128 feet broad, and at right angles to each other. On each side is a stream of living water, and rows of cotton-wood and locust trees border the side walks. There is but one main street, in which the houses are built close to each other; everywhere else each house stands in its own garden or orchard. Some of them are large, two or three stories high, built of burnt bricks, red sandstone, or granite, but most are of white sun dried bricks. They look clean and cheerful: the door- posts, window-sills, &c., are of wood, painted bright green, or of rich red sandstone, and creepers adorn the walls. The gardens are well and tastefully kept, and fruit-trees are particularly successful. . . . Altogether, few towns have been so judiciously designed and so perfectly built; few enjoy so great natural advantages, which have been cleverly made the most of. The barren country we passed through would have prepared us to appreciate any place where there might be a spare blade of grass, but Salt Lake City would be considered beautiful anywhere. When it is remembered that seventeen years ago, this end of the valley was a desert, like the other, one is astonished at the enterprise and perseverance of the Mormon leaders."

[Verney, Edmund Hope. An overland journey from San Francisco to New York by way of the Salt Lake City, 1866. Personal History,](#)
pages [19](#) - [20](#)

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/trails/history5.html>

After leaving Nauvoo they started westward, their destination being California. On the morning of the 16th of June, 1847, Orson Pratt and the advance guard, wending their way over the Wasatch Mountains, sighted the Great Salt Lake through what is now known as Emigration Pass. They came down into the valley and concluded to wait until the main body had arrived. The next afternoon (June 17th, 1847,) the entire party came into the valley Brigham Young in command, and camped on the spot where is now being built the Temple, probably as substantial a piece of

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As there is in the world. The company was composed of, I think, 147 men and three women. They had had a hard trip; their supplies were short and California was still a long way off. Salt Lake Valley was then a desolate spot, but they concluded to rest there for a time, plant crops and prepare themselves for their next year's trip to the far west.

When the season had rolled by and their crops had been gathered in they concluded to abandon the westward trip and to settle where they were. Then commenced the building of Salt Lake City. They had everything to oppose them—nature and the elements—but Salt Lake City stands to-day as a model for any of our cities to copy, especially New York.