

## New Mormon Emigration Finding Aids: The Compiler's Personal Experiences

*Melvin L. Bashore*

For the past ten years, I have been locating, reading, and creating finding aids to Mormon emigration narratives. In the course of my first ten years working in the Historical Department Church Library, I watched many people leave our library in disappointment when we couldn't easily and quickly help them find information about the pioneer experiences of their ancestors. For instance, a patron would enter our library with the name of an ancestor. We would help him find what company his ancestor traveled with to Zion. We would then give him a list of everyone in that company, possibly five hundred to six hundred names, and tell him to look up all those names in both the library and archives catalogs to see if any of them had kept a diary of the journey. The patron would usually tell us that he had only five minutes on his parking meter—and that's the last we would see of him!

An earlier generation of Historian's Office employees created some basic emigration finding aids. They included name indexes to Mormon-chartered ships sailing from Great Britain to America and an index to pioneer companies crossing the plains to Utah. These two indexes are basic finding aids, but they just didn't seem to reach deep enough into the sources to really help our patrons.

I felt we should have some additional finding aids. A decade ago, I began devoting some time to creating finding aids that would delve deeper into the sources. I began by systematically surveying our library and archival collections for emigration narratives. I surveyed large collections of documents and sources that had been identified by bibliographers, catalogers, or archivists as containing information on emigration. I surveyed all published autobiographies and diaries, looking for accounts of ship travel or crossing the plains. I listed these

---

MELVIN L. BASHORE is a senior librarian in the Church Library of the LDS Church Historical Department. He has compiled source guides to ship and wagon train company narratives and is presently studying deaths on the Mormon Trail.

published and unpublished accounts and where they could be identified for each Mormon-chartered ship and pioneer company. I visited repositories in northern Utah looking for emigration narratives that were not in the holdings of the Historical Department and included them in these two finding aids—the source guide to ship narratives and to companies crossing the plains. It was a large undertaking. In the pioneer company source guide, there are probably fifteen hundred emigration narratives with an additional one thousand variants.

These finding aids made it possible for our library to easily and quickly help people find out details about the voyage of an ancestor sailing across the Atlantic Ocean to America or crossing the plains in a pioneer company. It became a valuable tool for people writing family histories and for historians and writers.

About a year before the Church's celebration of the Pioneer Sesquicentennial, I began to think we might need a more detailed finding aid to the plains narratives. We were starting to receive questions that couldn't be quickly researched using the simple listing in the crossing-the-plains source guide. We decided to use FOLIO® software to enter abstracts for each of the pioneer narratives. With the FOLIO® software, we could then text search for any words in the database. A small group of devoted workers, including Church service missionaries and a few library staff members, read and summarized the important information, stories, incidents, names, places, and pioneering experiences in all these narratives. The abstracting phase of this project was completed in about fourteen months—a phenomenal accomplishment! It was entered in FOLIO® in a rough, unedited form. It is still in that rough form needing editing, but even so, it was an invaluable resource during the sesquicentennial celebration. Its availability is still restricted to in-house use on a limited basis because of staff limitations and its unfinished nature.

In addition to its obvious use for family history research, it was employed to find information for historic markers and for tourism brochures, to answer media questions, and to help historians and writers. It has helped in clarifying our understanding of Mormon emigration history. When I showed this new research tool to Stan Kimball, one of the recognized authorities on the Mormon Trail, he told me he didn't have another lifetime to make use of its research potential.

Researchers can consult the lists of accounts about the ocean voyages and the wagon trains at the LDS Church Historical Department Library in the East Wing of the LDS Church Office Building, 50 East North Temple, in Salt Lake City. Copies of the typescript printouts in binders are at the LDS Family History Library west across the street from Temple Square, in some LDS Family History Centers outside of Salt Lake City, and at the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University. The formal names for the guides are as follows:

1. *Mormons on the High Seas: Ocean Voyage Narratives to America (1840-*

---

1890): *Guide to Sources in the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Other Utah Repositories*. This is a looseleaf typescript that is periodically updated. A sample page shows the ships *Kangaroo* (1862), *Kenilworth* (1866), and the *Kennebec* (1852). [see page 105]

2. *Mormon Pioneer Companies (1847-1868) Narratives: A Guide to Sources in Utah Libraries and Archives*. This is a looseleaf typescript that is periodically updated. A sample page is shown for the Miner G. Atwood Company in 1865. It is not annotated but simply lists a page worth of the accounts we have identified that deal with this company. [see page 106]

3. *Mormon Pioneer Companies Crossing the Plains (1847-1868) Narratives: A Guide to Sources in Utah Libraries and Archives*. This is a computer database only (not hard copy) that is constantly being updated and that is found only at the LDS Church Historical Department Library. Unlike the binder version just listed, this one is annotated and contains summaries of what the individual accounts contain. For example, three entries are shown for the Chester Loveland wagon company of 1868. [see pages 107-108]

Unlike Stan Kimball, I have really only gotten to know the history of the Mormon Trail through the documents. I haven't gotten my feet "dirty" like Stan has—until this summer. We were invited to join several of my wife's cousins for a couple of days pushing handcarts on the trail in Wyoming. The Riverton Wyoming Stake also scheduled me to speak at a stake fireside. I had helped them in the early stages of their "Second Rescue" project where over a thousand temple ordinances were performed for members of the 1856 Willie and Martin companies. So we spent several days in early July on the trail and with the wonderful, devoted people in the Lander-Riverton area. I went without expectations, but the experience affected me greatly. The trail touched me to the core. I'm a hiking fool—I go hiking every week all year round, but I really didn't want to push a handcart. I thought it sounded hokey. I just wanted to hike the trail. But handcarts won't move unless they are pushed, so I got into the spirit of it all—pushing and pulling the carts—and my spirit was better for it.

I prepared for our handcart jaunt by using our FOLIO® text-searching database to find out what events in trail history happened at various places along where we were going to push carts between Rocky Ridge and Rock Creek. It was planned that I would read excerpts from diaries about experiences that happened at the different places where we stopped for breaks along the trail. As the dry wind cooled off our sweaty backs, the writings of former-day pioneers fueled our imaginations and transported us back in time. At one of our breaks, we stopped at Strawberry Creek. Before fording the pretty little creek, I read a journal entry that told what happened to a pioneer company captained by James W. Cummings in 1851 at that place. It was especially interesting to my wife's

cousins because they were indirectly related to the key figure in the incident. Alan Stout's wagon was heavily loaded with twenty farm plows he was transporting to the valley. The load was so heavy for his wagon and the trail so rough up Rocky Ridge that his wheel broke twice and put him miles behind the company. After they were camped, several men had to go back to help him bring his broken wagon into camp. The journal entry for 11 September 1851 reads:

We all stopped until 12 o'clock to day to repair the waggon that was Broke yesterday. It belongs to Allen J. Stout and the Captain of the fifty ordered the freight taken out of Stouts waggon and it was ploughs and they were burried on the Bank of the Branch of the sweet water about 2 rods [thirty-three feet] above the ford. They had bords laid under and over them to keep them off of the ground and to keep the dirt from packing in on them. [W]e made a form of a grave and put a head bord up and on the head Bord was written with Black ink W Plow aged 20 (for there was 20 ploughs) Sept. 11th 1851.<sup>1</sup>

There we were last July, out in the middle of nowhere in southern Wyoming, only thirty-three feet from where my wife's cousins' ancestor had his iron plows buried under a wooden grave marker 146 years ago. At that moment, the distant past seemed very close.

The day previous to this trek, we had gone out to Martin's Cove. One of my married sons was with us. He had never seen that part of Wyoming and was ecstatic about the beauty of the land. As we neared Devil's Gate and the Sun Ranch, he asked, "Why didn't the Saints just stop here?" We wondered why they didn't, too. We soon found out why they didn't after we got out of the car at the visitor center—mosquitoes! The place was alive with them—and we had forgotten to bring the repellent! We got our cart at the center and off we went—keeping in constant motion to try to keep the pesky insects at bay. Hands and arms waving in the air, heads twitching—what a memory! You couldn't even take a drink from a water bottle without a couple of the little pests flying up your nostrils. I think the best time to go there would be in October or November, like the 1856 handcart people did. My wife proposed a theory—that mosquitoes were the real reason and motivation for the Saints coming all the way to Utah. The travelers just kept moving so they wouldn't get eaten alive.

When we got back from our trip to Wyoming, I decided to text search our abstracts in the FOLIO® database to see what the pioneers wrote about mosquitoes. Mosquitoes received mention in more than seventy Mormon Trail narratives. My wife was right! Mosquitoes drove the pioneers batty! Listen to this experience of a pioneer in 1852:

One night we camped in a willow patch and had to carry our water from a spring. I went with two buckets, one in each hand, but the mosquitoes covered both hands and face, and I had to set my bucket down to brush them off, but they came right back. I had to blow them out of my mouth until I reached the campfire smoke.<sup>2</sup>

Smoke and wind were the only elements that could keep mosquitoes at bay. Children cried all night because the insects bit them unmercifully. The eyes of some children were swollen shut with bites. In defense, the people pitched their tents close to and downwind from the campfire smoke. This positioning still wasn't good enough for one lady who got up in the middle of the night so she could sit right in the thick of the smoke next to the campfire. She sat there all night. Evening and night were the worst times for mosquitoes—no rest for the weary. A diarist in an 1859 handcart company wrote about the nightly battle with mosquitoes: "We turn our attention to the misquetoos of which there are thousands here; A dreadful fight is kept up all night, next morning we were showing each other the many wounds we had received in the engagement."<sup>3</sup>

Mosquitoes particularly liked to attend Mormon meetings held on the plains, especially those where the speeches and prayers were lengthy. A down-and-back teamster described one such meeting in 1861: "In the evening a meeting was held in camp, but the mosquitoes were there first and stay there they would. They sang at the opening song during service, and at the closing, and finally sung all night. Tried to sleep but they pulled me out of bed."<sup>4</sup> The mosquitoes even provided the following night's entertainment for this unfortunate company: "We had a gay ball this evening. We had the large and renowned band of minstrels composed of mosquitoes which kept us dancing all night."<sup>5</sup>

It paints a romantic picture, doesn't it? Dancing on the plains in the moonlight to the rhythmic strains of "Mosquito's Minstrel Band." Just think, this summer we were bitten by mosquitoes who were descendants of the original mosquitoes who bit the pioneers. What a bad memory! As one 1853 pioneer wrote, reflecting back upon his experiences at the end of the trail: "[I saw] Indians by the hundreds, buffalo by the thousands and mosquitoes by the billions."<sup>6</sup> I didn't see Indians or buffalo, but I can testify that Martin's Cove in July is the gathering place for billions of "those little insignificant pusillanimous glutinous animals of the sm[a]lller tribes."<sup>7</sup>

As I mentioned, I also gave a fireside while there for the Riverton Wyoming Stake. The Mormon Trail is right on the stake's doorstep, and the members had been immersed in handcart history since they began their "Second Rescue" project in 1991. The youth in their stake had done baptisms for the dead in the temple for those individuals in the Martin and Willie companies who had never previously had those ordinances performed. Many of these forgotten individuals were children and infants who had died on the trail. All of the youth who participated had learned as much as they could about the individuals for whom they performed temple work.

I was concerned that for the past six years, members of that stake had focused on two companies who were an anomaly in the history of the Mormon Trail. Members of those two companies suffered tragic loss of life. Hundreds of people died in the worst trail disaster in American history. But those two com-

panies were unique in Mormon emigration history. The fact is, most emigrants who started across the plains to go to Utah got there. The interest and attention of that stake were focused inordinately on gloom and doom. Although hardships did occur on the trail, we falsely skew our perception and understanding of the entire history of what happened on the Mormon Trail by excessively dwelling on the sufferings of a few. One of the most on-target assessments of Mormon Trail history that I read in Church publications during the sesquicentennial year was an observation by Virginia Hinckley Pearce:

When I think of pioneers, tragic scenes come to mind: handcarts in blizzards, sickness, frozen feet, empty stomachs, and shallow graves. However, as I learn more about that monumental trek I am convinced that along with those very real and dramatic scenes, *most* of the journey for *most* of the people was pretty routine. Mostly they walked and walked and walked.<sup>8</sup>

I couldn't agree more. So when I began preparing for this fireside, I knew I didn't want to dredge up more stories about "frozen feet, empty stomachs, and shallow graves." I decided to take it 180 degrees in the other direction—to a lighter view of what happened on the trail. I searched in the FOLIO® database for some of the funny things that happened and for some of the adventuresome incidents that might interest young people. Following are the kinds of stories I found interesting and entertaining.

I love oxen-harnessing stories. Tenderfoot, city-born European converts feature prominently in these funny stories. Most of them had never seen oxen before reaching the outfitting place on the American frontier. A humorous oxen-harnessing incident occurred in 1852 in the Abraham O. Smoot company:

At last our cattle and waggons arrived. . . . There was 33 waggons in the company, and if any of us ever seen a yoke of oxen before our arrival at Kansas City, I am not aware of it, for we knew no more about cattle than cattle knew about us. There was considerable manauvering in getting every one to know just what to do, but Brother Smoot and C. Layton had to use a great deal of patience while showing us what to do and how to yoke up the cattle. They were all unbroke except a few yoke which he purchased for leaders. One brother a Welshman tried to yoke up his team with the bows in the yoke, it was a yoke of Texas cattle. They had extra large horns. He tried till he was pattered out endeavoring to put the heads of his cattle through the bows in the yoke without taking them [the bows] out. It is useless to say that he was unsuccessfull. He then went to Brother Smoot and asked him if he had a saw. He asked what he wanted to do with a saw. The teamster replied innocently in broken Welsh that he was going to cut the horns off[ ] his oxen, but Brother Smoot did not reprove him but simpley said take the bows out of the yoke.<sup>9</sup>

Cutting the big, long horns off the ox to get his head in the harness certainly seems like a practical solution, doesn't it? This same writer described the

appearance of the Smoot company making its way across the plains:

To see our train in motion was quite interesting at least to the tutored American—who well understands the [gee and the] ha . . . —and knows just how to crack a whip. But to see a long train in motion and from 3 to 4 men to each team, one having a long whipstock and 15 foot lash, the others each with a long stick or club, and when any of the oxen would show signs of flying the track, a slash from the whip or a blow from a club sometimes would teach them to remain on the road. At other times in spite of all they could do, a team and sometimes several would run out on the prairie, the men running as hard as they could fly on both sides endeavoring to stop them. It was laughable to see men with a big club on his shoulder, a heavy coat on and a stiff stove pipe hat on, his coat tails in mid air. Then the man with the whip slashing at them and in place of striking the team he would get it tangled around his head and neck, then stop to undo it and after them again, the team running at full speed, making circles and semi-circles in quick time, the men puffing and blowing like a p[o]rpose.<sup>10</sup>

It wasn't easy to manage a team of oxen. An 1864 emigrant exhibited some pioneering practicality managing his ox team. He wrote: "I drove six head of oxen all the way. Of course at times they were hard to manage. We used whips aplenty. When they wore out we used to see if we could find a big snake. It was killed and a stick shoved in its mouth and that used as a whip."<sup>11</sup>

Another ox story comes from the writings of an 1853 pioneer: "On the boat the saints generally thought that the way to Zion was a hard road to travel, but found out later that they were not up against the real thing until they began to outfit and came in contact with a herd of wild Texas cattle with horns like a rainbow." The captain gave the order to each man to

"Bring in two yoke of oxen and one yoke of heifers." . . . These green Englishmen did not know a yoke from a bow, [or] a steer from a heifer, but they obeyed orders and went into the corral and got busy. In my opinion, however, had not help come they would still be there trying to catch those cattle. Fortunately there were a bunch of cowboys who came to their rescue. . . . The first two weeks out those English teamsters managed to tip over several wagons, broke numerous tongues, reach poles and wheels, due to misunderstandings between cattle and teamsters. We blamed the cattle at that time, but I now throw the blame on the teamsters as I believe the cattle understood their business best. Then, too, these cattle could not get into their heads the English brogue. They understood only the kind of United States the cowboy speaks.<sup>12</sup>

Sometimes cowboy language, even Mormon cowboy language, tended to be a bit rough, even profane, but after awhile and out of necessity, the emigrants improved their skills in handling oxen and driving teams.

They also found America to be full of new and interesting wild creatures. They tried to be helpful in procuring game and food to share with the company. There was one very old Danish man who had completely lost his sense of smell and who came into camp one day after the tents had been set up "with a skunk

which he counted on cooking for soup.” The artist C. C. A. Christensen was in this 1857 Danish company, and he wrote: “This almost made the rest of us leave. He had killed it with his cane and knew nothing about its peculiar means of defense.”<sup>13</sup>

Another tenderfoot was sent out in 1861 to hunt for snipes—the sport of snipe hunting is therefore at least 136 years old. Two young men were performing night guard duty at another company’s camp nearby. One of these young men described the scene in his diary:

Parker and myself went on guard about 10. Saw a man coming towards us. Hailed him the 2nd time[,] no stop[,] so we stopped him and found that he belonged to H. P. Kimball’s train which was a short distance ahead. The boys had got him to catch rabbits Yankee fashion by building a small fire, lying down by it with an open sack for the rabbits to run and then hit them on the head with a club now and then giving a low whistle. The boys going out round to drive them in. When all of a sudden the boys gave a yell. The man thought that the Indians were upon him and off he started at full run. He had run about a mile when we stopped him. The fellow was scared out of his wits. The cause was that he knew everything but Yankee tricks. Took him back to his train.<sup>14</sup>

Another young man faced a great trial when he was separated from his fiancée on his way to Utah. He didn’t have enough money to pay for both of them to travel together in the same company, so he paid her fare to travel with a Church company and signed on as a teamster with a Mormon freight company. Their parting was hurried. He wrote:

I . . . kissed my girl goodbye and gave her a half sovereign, all the money I had in the world, and jumped into the buckboard and off we went. . . . On our arrival at Florence all was excitement. I was introduced to a number of young men fitting out a freight train, some of whom had crossed the sea with me and some who had come from the mountains who were dressed in buckskins fringed and tasseled (rough looking Saints they seemed to me). In the evening they all gathered into the tent and D[avid] P. Kimball called all to order. . . . During all this time my mind was rambling over many things, especially as to when I should meet my dear girl again. . . . [After awhile], we began to turn in. I had occasion to go to my bag for some clothes and in taking out what I expected to be white duck sailor overalls and holding them up and examining them they turned out to be some sort of ladies’ unmentionables trimmed and adorned with lace. The eyes of the crowd caught onto it. . . . I had made a mistake and got my sweetheart’s bag instead of my own.<sup>15</sup>

It’s evident from these narratives that everything wasn’t gloom and doom on the trail. There were many lighthearted moments like these. Even when life on the trail was a trial, a sense of humor made the trek’s miles bearable—and, sometimes, even laughable.

Kangaroo (1862)

Taylor, George J. Autobiography (Ms 2936), bx. 1, fd. 2, pp. 25-26. (A)

Van Cott, John. Diaries, vol. 4. (A)

Kenilworth (1866)

Hansen, Caroline Pedersen, [Autobiography], Our Pioneer Heritage, comp. by Kate B. Carter, vol. 12 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1969) p. 67. (L)

Jenson, Andrew, Autobiography, Our Pioneer Heritage, comp. by Kate B. Carter, vol. 10 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1967) pp. 31-35. (L)

Jenson, Andrew, Autobiography of Andrew Jenson (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938) pp. 14-18. (L)

Lambert, George C., comp., Treasures in Heaven (Salt Lake City: privately published, 1914) pp. 27-29. (L)  
[biography of Niels P. L. Eskildz]

Ottesen, Larsine Olsen, [Autobiography], Our Pioneer Heritage, comp. by Kate B. Carter, vol. 17 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1974) pp. 167-68. (L)

Peterson, Ansine M. Journal (Man A 834), p. 6. (Utah State Historical Society)

Poulsen, John Christian. Diary (Ms 1700), pp. 43-44. (A)

Sprague, Samuel Lindsay. Diaries, vol. 2. (A)

Kennebec (1852)

Ballard, Henry. Reminiscences and diary (Ms 1699), pp. 1-2. (A)

Bell, Robert. Correspondence (Ms 5903), fd. 1, #2. (A)

Harris, George Henry Abbot. Journals (Ms 9080), vol. 1, pp. 67-82; (Ms 2850), vol. 1, pp. 57-73; Journal (Ms 798), pp. 57-73. (A)

Higbee, John Somers. Reminiscences and diaries, vols. 3 and 5. (A)

May, James. Reminiscences (Ms 1518), pp. 9-11. (A)

Spiers, John. Reminiscences and journal. (A)

1865

Miner G. Atwood Company

- A. W. D., "Adventures on the Plains," Juvenile Instructor 16:24 (15 December 1881) pp. 278-79. (L)
- Andelin, Maria Lofdahl, "Maria Lofdahl Andelin--1865," Our Pioneer Heritage, comp. by Kate B. Carter, vol. 9 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1966) pp. 81-82. (L)
- Anderson, James P. Autobiographical sketch. (A)  
Account of emigration experiences (pp. 1-2). Formerly in Msd 2050.
- Atwood, Miner G., [Journal], IN Murphy, Larry, comp., Hans Valtmer Hanson Family History (1980) chp. 2, pp. 15-45. (L)
- Davis, Albert Wesley, [Autobiography], Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine 17 (October 1926) 246; and 18 (January 1927) 6-7. (L)
- Davis, Albert Westley. Autobiography. (A)  
Experiences of a down-and-back teamster (pp. 5-8). Other variations of his experiences include "A Pioneer Experience" (pp. 1-3) and a life sketch (p. 1).
- Fredrickson, Lars. Biographical sketch of the Fredrickson family. (A)  
Brief account of emigration experiences (pp. 2-3). Formerly in Msd 2050.
- Grundvig, Francis Christian. Autobiographical sketch. (A)  
Includes account of his emigration to Utah (pp. 10-15).
- Grundvig, Frants Christian, [Autobiography], Our Pioneer Heritage, comp. by Kate B. Carter, vol. 9 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1966) pp. 69-70. (L)
- Hegsted, Hans Christian Sorensen. The life history of Hans Christian Sorensen Hegsted. (A)  
Brief recollection of his emigration experiences (p. 1).
- Hegsted, Hans L. S., [Journal], IN "Church Emigration Book, Vol. 3." (A)
- Holmgren, Per Olof. Diary. (A)  
Account of his immigration to Utah (p. 9).
- Journal History, November 8, 1865, pp. 5-22.  
Reminiscences of Miles P. Romney and journal of Miner G. Atwood.

---

Crossing the Plains Narratives -- Rough Copy Unedited

---

1868

1868

**Chester Loveland Company**

Cranney, W. D., [Reminiscences]. In Harriet Hinckley Eliason, comp., Willard Duane Cranney, Sr.: His Life and Letters, vol. 1 (W. D. Cranney, Sr. Family Association, 1957) pp. 10-17.

This is an account of a teamster who was under twenty years old who journeyed east to Laramie to meet the emigrants arriving by train. He commented on the killing of three mules by lightning at Laramie. He briefly described an incident at Sage Creek where two Englishmen were fighting for a clear place to put their tents. He described in detail an Indian chase and fight at Sage Creek where the Indians herded off the mules in effort to steal them and he and Joe Nelson chased them with gunfire, ultimately killing the Indians. They recovered the mules and the two Indian's horses as well. He wrote a poem of the incident titled "The Raid of the Sioux" which is included.

[LDS Church Library, Res M270.1 C891e; Acc. #2198]

Macfarlane, A. N., "From Dundee to Utah," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 30:52 (December 26, 1868) p. 817.

A Scottish emigrant writes of his journey to Salt Lake City with his family. They were the only Scottish people in the Loveland company. They spent a few hours in Castle Gardens, going by steamboat to the station of the Hudson River Railroad and waiting a long time to check and handle all the emigrants' luggage. The heat was excessive and six individuals died of heat stroke aboard the train. He described the train journey passing through Canada, Council Bluffs, crossing the Missouri to Omaha. At Omaha, they boarded the Great Union Pacific Railroad of which he writes that it's carriages are "really magnificent, and by far surpassing the finest first-class carriages in our own country." It took two days to get organized for the journey. Camp life was new to most of the emigrants and the men walked most of the way while the women and children rode. He was awakened by a guard at four o'clock each morning, prepared and ate breakfast by five o'clock, was led in prayer at five-thirty by a returning missionary, formed a corral with wagons, and gathered for musicals and recitals around a campfire after evening supper. He wrote about hot days and cold nights, romantic scenery at Echo Canyon, and being visited by many who were working on the railroad. He described Captain Loveland and the happy cheerful spirit which prevailed in the company. He recounted in detail an incident of two Indians driving the herd of mules from camp intending to steal them while the guards were busy getting a mule free which had gotten stuck in the mud. The mules were recovered and a fight ensued where both Indians were killed. The mules were superb in their ability to travel over the Rocky Mountains, especially South Pass. He described fording rivers, especially a rather high Platte River where "the women and children were allowed to stay in the wagons, but the men had the choice given to them of wading the river or crossing it on horseback." Five teamsters drowned at Green River who were on their way east to meet the Saints in Laramie. He wrote about the rugged and dangerous road through Parley's Canyon and of meeting an old friend, Brown, who was there to meet them with a team. Here he left the team and entered Salt Lake City by a different route.

[LDS Church Library, M205.5 M646]

---

 Crossing the Plains Narratives -- Rough Copy Unedited
 

---

## Street, Alexander. Journals and reminiscences.

Street (age 20) crossed the plains with his father and mother. It was terribly hot when they arrived in New York, causing several in the company to die from sun stroke. The Mormons were much disliked and someone tried to tell his father not to go to Utah because Brigham Young would take his wife and he would never be allowed to leave because the Danites would kill him. He wrote of his feelings concerning the greatness of Brigham Young and of having to ride in box cars and some in cattle cars to Laramie. While on the trail, he mentioned singing and praying in the morning and at night, sleeping on the ground, and described in detail how the wagons would circle and form a corral. They encountered Seeley's train in which five teamsters drowned while crossing the Green River. He was asked to take one of the teams and drive with his parents. Upon accepting the offer, he detailed the experience of driving a wagon, using a whip, and the process of yoking and unyoking the oxen. He detailed the burying of someone on the plains and his feelings concerning this. He commented about couples meeting on the plains and marrying. They met some desperados who tried to hold up the captain and threatened to kill him or steal the cattle before reaching Green River. He mentioned the death and burial of Charles Draper's children and finding and burying a man who had been killed by Indians near Devil's Gate. A cattle stampede is described in great detail during which he ran after the cattle and herded them back to camp with the help of Robert McMichael. Mention was made of an independent wagon in the same train belonging to William Sargent, his father, mother, brothers Nephi and Amos and his sister Esther.

[LDS Church Archives, Ms 2008, fd. 2, vol. 2, 11pp.; Acc. # 268669]

## Notes

1. Alfred Cordon Emigrating Company Journal, 11 September 1851, LDS Church Archives. In discussing this "plow" story with Lyndia Carter after our trek, she indicated that the incident probably occurred at Rock Creek, not Strawberry Creek.
2. Fredrick Weight, "A Short History of the Life of Fredrick Weight by Himself," 9.
3. John Young Smith Diary, 12 June 1859, in Ila May Fisher Maughan, *Joseph McKay-Martha Blair: Their Progenitors, Posterity and Lineal Lines—A Documented History, 1135-1967* (privately printed, 1967), 41.
4. Zebulon Jacobs Diary, 2 August 1861, LDS Church Archives.
5. *Ibid.*, 3 August 1861.
6. Thomas O. King Autobiographical Sketch, [1, 3], LDS Church Archives.
7. Ossian F. Taylor Journal, 24 June 1851, LDS Church Archives.
8. Virginia H. Pearce, "Keep Walking, and Give Time a Chance," *Ensign*, May 1997, 86.
9. James Thomas Wilson, "The Life of James Thomas Wilson," (1948), 44-47, 49-50.
10. *Ibid.*
11. James T. Sutton Autobiographical Sketch, *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1974), 17:298.
12. John Fell Squires Autobiography, in Thomas Squires Family, "Notes of Interest . . .," 1x.
13. C. C. A. Christensen, "By Handcart to Utah: The Account of C. C. A. Christensen," trans. Richard L. Jensen, *Nebraska History* 66 (Winter 1985): 342.
14. Jacobs, 24 August 1861.
15. William Wood Sr. Autobiography, *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1970), 13:272-73.