

Quotations by Mormon Pioneers from

SAINTS AT DEVIL'S GATE
LANDSCAPES ALONG THE MORMON TRAIL

THE CHURCH
HISTORIAN'S

P R E S S

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In quotations from manuscript sources, the editors have sometimes silently standardized spelling, capitalization, and punctuation to aid readability. Occasionally the editors added words to quotations to enhance clarity; such additions are enclosed in brackets.

Nauvoo, Illinois

“[We] crossed the [Mississippi] River on the ice. . . . The last wagon crossing the river broke through. . . . My husband in helping to get the wagon from the river got very wet and took a violent cold that settled on his lungs from which he never recovered. He died six weeks later and was buried by the roadside between two large trees to mark his resting place.”¹

Harriet Amelia Decker Little (Hanks)

Age 19, February 1846, exodus across Iowa. Reminiscence, 1914.

“I went with my family to the [Mississippi] River to cross over into Iowa. We waited a while for a boat. At length we went on board of an old small boat and started over, the wind being quite high & the river rough. While on the water I beheld the most heart rending and dangerous scenes that I was ever called to witness. . . . [*Stout described seeing a boat full of Saints sink while crossing the river.*] They gave themselves up to the watery grave and all was hushed and the boat went down. In a few minutes we saw them scattered on the surface of the water . . . in silent & frightful anticipation of soon leaving this world of fears & disappointments. Some were on feather beds, sticks of wood, lumber or anything they could get hold of and were tossed & sported on the water at the mercy of the cold and unrelenting waves.”²

Hosea Stout

Age 35, February 1846, exodus across Iowa. Trail journal.

Montrose, Iowa

“I left Nauvoo for the last time perhaps in this life. I looked upon the temple & city of Nauvoo as I retired from it & felt to ask the Lord to preserve it as a monument of the sacrifice of his Saints.”³

Wilford Woodruff

Age 39, May 1846, exodus across Iowa. Trail journal.

“We left the Mississippi about noon. We ascended the bluffs. Here we halted, and took a farewell view of our delightful city, that we had seen and helped to rear from its infancy. We also beheld the magnificent temple, rearing its lofty tower towards the heavens, which speaks volumes in honor of the wisdom and greatness of our martyred prophet. . . . We also took a farewell look at our homes. Whilst looking and pondering upon all this, I felt grateful to my heavenly father . . . and asked His protecting care over us on our journey. Yea, my heart swelled within me, because of the things which I beheld.”⁴

Newel Knight

Age 45, April 1846, exodus across Iowa. Trail journal.

Near Sugar Creek Camp, Iowa

“While traveling through the state of Iowa with six hundred immigrants with hand-carts and the dust of harvest weather four or five inches deep, the sun pouring down on our heads and the perspiration and wet dust streaming down our faces and in our throats, choking us so we could hardly breathe

and tantalized by the people coming out of their houses and telling us that was a . . . hard way to serve the Lord, and . . . the young hoodlums would go ahead of the company to the next river or creek to ridicule our wives and daughters who had to raise their dresses out of the water to wade the streams as there was not many bridges.”⁵

John Watkins

Age 22, English convert, late summer 1856, Edward Martin handcart company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

“I had worn my English bonnet this day and the sun scorched my face— It felt on fire— Mr. Shores took particular pains to caution us against getting our complexions spoilt— Even Anne he talked to about covering her arms— He said he hated to see a woman’s fine skin burned up . . . I mounted my post to drive the horses . . . I feel sure few women (English) dare drive over where I have gone, and it has shaken my nerves into a muddle.”⁶

Hannah Tapfield King

Age 46, English convert, late spring 1853, Claudius V. Spencer company. Reminiscence, circa 1864–1872.

Near Richardson’s Point, Iowa

“Suddenly the loud thunders began to roar! Fierce lightnings flashed! I knew my tent would not shed rain, and I dreaded the consequences of a hard shower more than I ever did in my life. I prayed most fervently that the storm might pass over and do us no harm! Suddenly the clouds began to disperse, the thunder rumbled in the distance. I looked abroad and saw the clear sky. I felt a glow of gratitude I shall long remember.”⁷

Louisa Barnes Pratt

Age 43, summer 1846, exodus across Iowa. Reminiscence, 1850–1880.

“Mr. Sessions overtakes me today at Richardson’s point. Yesterday I felt bad. I was not well, and I and our things were scattered on account of our heavy load and bad roads and were in nine different places. We are all together now but our cow.”⁸

Martha (Patty) Bartlett Sessions (Parry)

Age 51, March 1846, exodus across Iowa. Trail journal.

Locust Creek, Iowa

“Yesterday we travelled over the most intolerable roads! It was a query in my mind how the first company, going as they did early in the spring, ever forced their way through so much mud! I was led to exclaim, what is there in all the world, the Mormons will not attempt to do?”⁹

Louisa Barnes Pratt

Age 43, June 1846, exodus across Iowa. Reminiscence, 1850–1880.

“Thus far have had good roads considering the heavy rains. This is I think the most beautiful country that I ever saw. The prairies are rolling with streams of water plenty. The inhabitants are mostly

people from the eastern states and generally kind to us. . . . There is little fear of losing our road as there is but one.”¹⁰

Lorenzo Brown

Age 23, May 1846, exodus across Iowa. Reminiscence, circa 1856.

“Continued to rain all day very heavy. The camp is very disagreeable and muddy. . . . In the evening . . . the band met in the tent and played on the violins. All the time we were playing, the lightning occasionally broke forth from the N. W. [Northwest]. At 8 o’clock we dispersed just as the storm approached. . . . The rain beat through the wagon covers & drenched families and effects. It was the most severe storm we have experienced and with such weather it seems impossible to preserve our little clothing & provisions from being spoiled. But in the midst of all the camp all are cheerful and happy and there are but few sick. . . . This morning Ellen Kimball came to me & wished me much joy. She said Diantha [Clayton’s wife] has got a son. . . . This morning I composed a new song, “All is Well” [“Come, Come, Ye Saints”]. I feel to thank my heavenly father for my boy and pray that he will spare and preserve his life and that of his mother. . . . O Lord bless thine handmaid and fill her with thy Spirit. Make her healthy that her life may be prolonged and that we may live long upon the earth to honor the cause of truth.”¹¹

William Clayton

Age 31, English convert, April 6 and 15, 1846, exodus across Iowa. Trail journal.

Mount Pisgah, Iowa

“Drove about 3 miles & came to a house the last one on our route. We thus leave the abodes of civilization to go forth as wanderers on the Earth without homes not knowing on what part of the continent we might be permitted to stop, some asserting our destination was Salt Lake Valley, some that we were going to some point on the upper Mississippi . . . while I believe it was thought by many that we should locate ourselves on Van Couvers [Vancouver] Island at the mouth of the Columbia River which is British Territory. I have often laughed at an observation made to me by a settler with whom I chanced to meet one day on the prairie. His inquiry was what part are you expecting to locate in. I answered in all sincerity, I really do not know sir. His reply was, When I leave with my family not knowing where I expect to stop, any person is at liberty to call me a damned fool.”¹²

Lorenzo Brown

Age 23, May 28, 1846, exodus across Iowa. Reminiscence, circa 1856.

“I stopped my carriage on the top of a rolling prairie and I had a most splendid view. I could stand and gaze to the east, west, north & south & behold the Saints pouring out & gathering like clouds from the hills & dales, grove & prairie with their teams, waggons, flocks, & herds, by hundreds & thousands as it were until it looked like the movements of a great nation.”¹³

Wilford Woodruff

Age 39, June 1846, exodus across Iowa. Trail journal.

“The wind is blowing a heavy gale: it seems as though the very heavens would come down to earth! The tent is pinned down, or it would be carried away. The elements are in great commotion, and

my mind is dark and dismal! I think, ‘What if we have to wander forty years in the wilderness, as the children of Israel did!’”¹⁴

Louisa Barnes Pratt

Age 43, June 1846, exodus across Iowa. Reminiscence, 1850–1880.

“Riding about three or four miles through beautiful prairies, I came suddenly to some round and sloping hills, grassy and crowned with beautiful groves of timber; . . . on the west, rolled a main branch of Grand River, with its rich bottoms of alternate forest and prairie. As I approached this lovely scenery several deer and wolves, being startled at the sight of me, abandoned the place and bounded away till lost from my sight amid the groves. Being pleased and excited at the varied beauty before me, I cried out, ‘This is Mount Pisgah.’”¹⁵

Parley P. Pratt

Age 39, spring 1846, exodus across Iowa. Reminiscence, circa 1854–1856.

“This place is called Mount Pisgah and is a very beautiful situation; the prairie rolling and rich, skirted with beautiful groves of timber on the main fork of Grand River.”¹⁶

William Clayton

Age 31, English convert, May 26, 1846, exodus across Iowa. Trail journal.

“Came on through Pisgah. Road very muddy. Nothing seemed very pleasant to me. . . . Crossed a branch of Grand River. Very bad bridge. Had to ford. A few miserable looking log cabins in P[isgah], and some of the raggedest children I ever saw.”¹⁷

Caroline Barnes Crosby

Age 41, May 1848, Willard Richards company. Trail journal.

Western Iowa

“There was a dreadful hill to climb as we drove off the boat, deep mud, and at the top thick woods. It was dark, and we dared not drive on. Had no place to pitch the tent. So there we must remain till morning, mosquitoes beyond endurance. I, with a raging fever, the four children with me on the bed.”¹⁸

Louisa Barnes Pratt

Age 44, September 1847, exodus across Iowa. Reminiscence, 1850–1880.

“It seems hardly worthwhile to write every day’s journal for they consist all the time of thunder storms—mud holes, making bridges—getting wet thro’ beds and all. I note down some of these, and then add how I enjoy my carriage bed & how thankful I am for my many blessings.”¹⁹

Hannah Tapfield King

Age 46, English convert, June 1853, Claudius V. Spencer company. Reminiscence, circa 1864–1872.

Council Bluffs, Iowa

“Traveled through a beautiful country where we could stand and gaze upon the prairies as far as the eye could carry, even until the prairies themselves seemed to meet the sky on all sides, without being able to see a house. Thought how many thousands of people are there in England who have scarce room to breathe and not enough to eat. Yet, all this good land lying dormant, except for the prairie grass to grow and decay.”²⁰

Samuel Openshaw

Age 22, English convert, August 1856, Edward Martin handcart company. Trail journal.

Winter Quarters, Nebraska

“The Missouri, just one big river of mud, flowing out of somewhere, sluggishly past, and on into a nowhere! ‘However can we wash our clothes in this,’ was my uppermost thought and I was really greatly relieved when I found that all the washing was to be done at a spring situated in a group of trees, near the camp.”²¹

Amelia Eliza Slade (Bennion)

Age 9, English convert, early summer 1864, Warren S. Snow company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

“A cold dreary winter was before us. I hired a man to build me a sod cave; he took the turf from the earth, laid it up, covered it with willow brush and sods; built a chimney of the same. I hung up a blanket for a door, had three lights of glass to emit light. I built a fire, drew up my rocking chair before it, and that moment felt as rich as some persons (who have never suffered for want of a house) would to be moved into a costly building. Thus we learn to prize enjoyments by sacrifices.”²²

Louisa Barnes Pratt

Age 44, winter 1846–1847, Winter Quarters camp. Reminiscence, 1850–1880.

“Soon we are where the Saints had their Winter Quarters when they were driven from civilization. Here were relics of different natures; a house that Brigham Young had lived in, a well that Heber C. Kimball had dug and the remains of dugouts, camping places and other sacred memories of gone-by time.”²³

John Lingren

Age 18, Swedish convert, spring 1863, John F. Sanders company. Reminiscence, 1893.

“We now hastened our departure from Winter Quarters, glad to get away from that inhospitable place with life even, for we did not think we should have had even that if we had remained much longer.”²⁴

George Washington Hill

Age 25, summer 1847, Abraham O. Smoot–George B. Wallace company. Reminiscence, 1878.

Elkhorn River Crossing, Nebraska

“We found this to be a pleasant place to camp. The river abounded with fish, and we found a variety of wild fruit, such as gooseberries, currants and wild grapes. The men and boys indulged in bathing and fishing; the women and girls, in gathering fruit. One boy caught a fish which weighed eighteen pounds and he could not pull it out of the water. One of the men got a gun and shot it for the boy.”²⁵

Henry Stokes

Age 33, English convert, August 6, 1862, Henry W. Miller company. Trail journal.

“We made our way as best we could to the Elkhorn River to the place where we could be organized for the journey. Here we had to make a raft of logs to ferry ourselves over the river. I assisted to ferry the whole of the companies, consisting of some five hundred and sixty wagons, over this river on a log raft, accomplishing this feat without accident of any note. We were here organized into A[braham] O. Smoot’s hundred, Major [Samuel] Russell’s fifty, and Samuel Turnbow’s ten.”²⁶

George Washington Hill

Age 25, summer 1847, Abraham O. Smoot–George B. Wallace company. Reminiscence, 1878.

Near Fort Kearny, Nebraska

“Elizabeth [Meneary Scott] in one wagon had sons 4–6 and 2 daughters 8–10 and a new baby too. [I] had a son [Hyrum] 22 months old and Sarah [Ann Willis] . . . had a son [Joseph] 2 months old in her arms. Yet here we . . . who have been raised in luxury, are bravely trying to drive a mule team across the plains, holding our babies. We take turns driving. You can just imagine we three women climbing in and out over wagon wheels to cook on the camp fire and wash clothes.”²⁷

Mary Pugh Scott

Age 26, English convert, circa June 1848, Heber C. Kimball company. Reminiscence, 1877.

“Started at half past eight o’clock. The weather is extremely hot which makes it hard traveling. Stopped at one o’clock, but moved no farther today. It would truly be an amusing and interesting scene if the people of the old country could have a bird’s eye view of us when in camp; to see everyone busy—some fetching water, others gathering buffalo chips, some cooking and so forth upon these wild prairies where the air is not tainted with the smoke of cities or factories, but is quiet here. One may see a creek at a distance and start and travel one hour towards it, yet seems no nigher than you did when you started.”²⁸

Samuel Openshaw

Age 22, English convert, September 16, 1856, Edward Martin handcart company. Trail journal.

West of Fort Kearny, Nebraska

“One evening as we prepared to stop for the night a large herd of buffalo came thundering toward us. It sounded like thunder at first, then the big black animals came straight for our carts. We were so scared that we were rooted to the ground. One of the captains, seeing what was going on, ran for the carts . . . to make a path for the steady stream of animals and let them go through. They went

past us like a train roaring along. I'm sure that but for the quick thinking of these men that many of us would have been trampled to death. . . . After they had gone somebody called out that the cattle had gone with them. This was our only supply of meat, so the men started right out after them. The men on foot soon lost the sight of the herd."²⁹

Emma James (Johnson)

Age 17, English convert, September 1856, James G. Willie handcart company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

“In the course of my walk I saw a large buffalo which had been to the river for drink. He was just rising the bank as I came in sight of him. It appeared that his curiosity was as much aroused as mine. He gazed at me for a moment, as I did at him. Then shaking his head and switching his tail, [he] started toward me in great haste, but as there were several deep gulfs between us I was not much afraid of his reaching before I could gain the wagons, however I concluded it was best for me to be leaving. . . . Yesterday we found several buffalo skulls with inscriptions on them which gave us intelligence from the forward co[mpanie]s. We found they were a month wanting four days before us.”³⁰

Caroline Barnes Crosby

Age 41, August 1848, Willard Richards company. Trail journal.

Platte River, Nebraska

“Encamped near the Platte River having passed the beautiful scenery my eyes ever rested upon. . . . The wild flowers beautiful to behold, the air redolent with their odor, the calm still waters of beautiful lakes all serving alike to awake an adoration to that God at whose word we have left the happy scenes of childhood years to repair to the mountains with the Saints of light. . . . Oh how I wish mine were a painter's pencil or a poet's pen. I would portray if possible the beauty of the scenes through which we have been called to pass.”³¹

Sarah Maria Mousley (Cannon)

Age 29, July and August 1857, Jacob Hofheins company. Trail journal.

“We have had the Platte River by us for the past week. It is very pretty—full of little islands— Oh! I can write no more. The mosquitoes drive me mad!”³²

Hannah Tapfield King

Age 46, English convert, August 3, 1853, Claudius V. Spencer company. Reminiscence, circa 1864–1872.

“Travelled 12 miles, according to William Clayton's Roadometer, attached this morning. The valley thro' which we have this day travelled may aptly be called the Valley of Dry Bones from the immense number of bleached buffalo bones. A young buffalo [was] killed & brought into camp. Lightning in the north west—dark clouds.”³³

Thomas Bullock

Age 30, English convert, May 12, 1847, Brigham Young 1847 pioneer company. Trail journal.

Chimney Rock, Nebraska

“A long day’s travel! This day these sublime bluffs in view all day!— They plainly speak a designer— tho’ ages must have rolled along since that design was carried out.

“The Bluff ruins . . . are very beautiful— I should like to have an explanation about them—but I suppose none know their history— They stand out in bold relief with a silent eloquence that speaks trumpet-tongued to every thinking mind— There they are looking eternally silent.”³⁴

Hannah Tapfield King

Age 46, English convert, August 3 and 5, 1853, Claudius V. Spencer company. Reminiscence, circa 1864–1872.

“We camped at the foot of Chimney Rock. This is a large mound with a rock sticking up in the center like a chimney about two hundred and fifty feet high. Here many of our camp went on to the top of the mound and found the names of some of the pioneers that was ahead of us, for they had passed there some time before. Here my husband wrote his name on the rock with red keal, also my name and the names of his other wives that was with us and our children’s names.”³⁵

Sarah DeArmon Pea Rich

Age 32, August 1, 1847, Charles C. Rich company. Reminiscence, circa 1890–1893.

“Passed Chimney Rock, which is a rock that rises in the form of a monument or chimney and can be seen at a distance. We continued our journey as quick as we possibly could. The cold increasing upon us. It is severe nights and mornings. Our provisions are running out very fast so allowance has been one pound per day.”³⁶

Samuel Openshaw

Age 22, English convert, October 3, 1856, Edward Martin handcart company. Trail journal.

“We are in sight of Chimney Rock, a cliff of sand looking like a tomb on the other side of the river, or an old courthouse. Go over the bluffs. Camp on the river.”³⁷

Martha (Patty) Bartlett Sessions (Parry)

Age 52, July 29, 1847, Daniel Spencer–Perrigrine Sessions company. Trail journal.

Scotts Bluff, Nebraska

“Elder Alexander Badlam and myself explored Scott’s Bluffs from top to bottom for about 10 miles. They had many grand formations of nature. In some places we rolled off large rocks of near a ton’s weight that would go thundering down the mountains & into the vale beneath, leveling the cedars to the earth & starting the wolves from their hiding places as it bounded on its way for half a mile from its starting point.”³⁸

Wilford Woodruff

Age 43, August 14, 1850, Wilford Woodruff company. Trail journal.

“Scott’s Bluffs were in view all day. They were certainly the most remarkable sight I had seen since I left England. Viewed from the distance at which I sketched them the shadows were of an intense

blue, while the rock illuminated by the setting sun partook of its gold, making a beautiful harmony of colour. They present a very singular appearance, resembling ruined palaces, castellated towers, temples and monuments.”³⁹

Frederick Piercy

Age 23, English convert, July 1853, Daniel A. Miller–John W. Cooley company. Reminiscence, circa 1854–1855.

Guernsey, Wyoming

“We took the new road up North Platte. Our company consisted of about ten men at that time and four wagons, and we were all strangers to the road and country. . . . [We were] all tired and almost famishing for water. Strong men cried for water. Some rocks near the road drew my attention, and when I had got to the top of one of those large rocks, I reached down in the top of a large one that was hollow, and to my great joy and to the joy of our company, I found a few gallons of water that had been deposited by the rain, which enabled us to continue our search. When I found the water in the rock, the story of Moses came to my mind, and I felt to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in our behalf.”⁴⁰

Noah Brimhall

Age 24, summer 1850, unknown company. Reminiscence, circa 1900–1910.

“[Camping life] was indeed something new for us. The fixing of tents under the trees in the wood, the building of a campfire, the baking of our bread in baking kettles, the washing of our clothes and the tending of our baby boy just learning to walk were sometimes trying to one who had hardly ever cooked a meal, mixed bread or washed clothes. But, though some of the work was hard and many were the privations that we were beginning to feel, we still felt happy.”⁴¹

Louise Charlotte Leuba Graehl

Age 31, Swiss convert, circa spring 1854, Robert L. Campbell company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

“We saw a great many Gentile graves on the road. The cholera had slayed them terribly. There was wagons, tires, clothing, guns, bedding, boots and shoes scattered along the road.”⁴²

Elijah Averett

Age 39, summer 1851, Aaron Johnson company. Reminiscence, circa 1860s.

Ayres Natural Bridge, Wyoming

“There was wild weird romance about the country like some dream, some imaginary scene materialized. During the evenings the sound of music in different parts of the camp seems strangely harmonious with the almost deathlike solitude of those uninhabited regions.”⁴³

John Lingren

Age 18, Swedish convert, summer 1863, John F. Sanders company. Reminiscence, 1893.

“Passed an arch of stone which stretched entirely across the river and over hung by very high hills of red sand stone. The arch was more than 20 ft. high. Passing up the stream we found that it broke through the high mountain in a rough & rugged current. There were fresh signs of bear.”⁴⁴

Hosea Stout

Age 37, July 31, 1848, Brigham Young 1848 company. Trail journal.

Near the Old Mormon Ferry, Casper, Wyoming

“I and Eliza Olivia [Stokes’s daughter] traveled by the side of the Platte River a long way and in coming to a nice shallow creek which we had to cross, we pulled off our shoes and stockings and washed our feet and drank freely of the water.”⁴⁵

Henry Stokes

Age 33, English convert, August 30, 1862, Henry W. Miller company. Trail journal.

“On arriving at the North Platte and up the Sweetwater, not knowing how to take advantage of mountain travel, selecting feed ground, etc. my cattle died by drinking poisonous or alkali water. So much so that my team and many others was so reduced that we could not travel until aid was sent us from Salt Lake Valley by those who had emigrated the previous year.”⁴⁶

Robert Taylor Burton

Age 26, Canadian convert, summer 1848, Brigham Young 1848 company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

Casper, Wyoming

“The sun was so hot that sometimes it seemed as if we could stand it no longer. Or sometimes the wind would blow the sand and dirt all over us. They told us in England that everyone had to eat a peck of dirt before he died. I had more than my peck while I was crossing the plains but it didn’t take the place of food.”⁴⁷

Sarah Hancock Beesley

Age 19, English convert, summer 1859, George Rowley handcart company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

North Platte River, near the Old Mormon Ferry, Casper, Wyoming

“Commenced crossing some waggons on a raft & some floated with poles under & by the side of them. . . . The poles broke under my wagon . . . and it turned up sidewise but ’twas righted & all got ashore without much injury. Some 12 or 15 waggons were got over during the day. A copious shower with hail fell about 3 o’clock. . . . The water is rising fast, & we concluded not to float any more waggons, as it is attended with much danger & risk.”⁴⁸

Norton Jacob

Age 42, June 14, 1847, Brigham Young 1847 pioneer company. Trail journal.

Red Butte, Wyoming

“Halt opposite ‘Red Buttes’ about 3/4 hour, no water— pretty good feed— hitch up— go half a mile & water cattle— then start . . . over gravel road— leaving a row of hills on the left— come to a natural wall— descend a gully— by zig zag, uneven road & very bad— turn to the right [and] halt in a hollow. . . . Bad water, saline deposit— scanty grass— no wood— but some Artemesia. I ascend [a] steep hill with Professor [Orson] Pratt [and] find some green & divers colored stones. Fine view of the country, it being a very steep high hill.”⁴⁹

Thomas Bullock

Age 30, English convert, June 19, 1847, Brigham Young pioneer company. Trail journal.

“This is a sterile barren region except low bottoms which afford good grass. But this is a place of most forbidding aspect, as one of my men expressed himself—‘Such a country! Mire holes on the mountain, frost in July, salt water & no wood to cook with’— We had to resort to the buffalo chips again & sage brush to cook our meat.”⁵⁰

Norton Jacob

Age 42, June 19, 1847, Brigham Young 1847 pioneer company. Trail journal.

Devil’s Backbone and Rock Avenue, Wyoming

“Tarried [at] what is termed the Devil’s Back Bone. It consists of a long range of rocks and looks as though they were thrown up from beneath and pointing upwards like ice in a jamb. It is a singular sight.”⁵¹

Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner

Age 45, August 11, 1863, Alvus H. Patterson company. Trail journal.

“There is a high ridge of sharp pointed rocks running parallel with the road for near a quarter of a mile, leaving only sufficient space for wagons to pass. At the south point there is a very large rock [that] lays close to where the road makes a bend, making it somewhat difficult to get by without striking it. The road is also very rough with cobble stones. . . . This is considered by all to be the worst camping ground we have had on the journey . . . , the land being perfectly sandy and barren, and nothing growing but wild sage and a small prickly shrub something like the whins on the moors in Lancashire, England.”⁵²

William Clayton

Age 32, English convert, June 19, 1847, Brigham Young 1847 pioneer company. Trail journal.

Independence Rock, Wyoming

“Arose early, had breakfast soon, and all necessary arrangements made for visiting Independence Rock. Mounted its towering summit and viewed the surrounding objects, but I feel my pen or thoughts inadequate to the task of portraying a true picture of the awful grandeur and beauty of these scenes. Encamped about three miles this side of Devil’s Gate.”⁵³

Sarah Maria Mousley (Cannon)

Age 29, August 25, 1857, Jacob Hofheins company. Trail journal.

“We heard so much of Independence Rock long before we got there. They said we should have a dance on top of it, as we had many a dance while on the plains. We thought it would be so nice, but when got there, the company was so small that it was given up. We nooned at this place, but Father stayed long enough for us children to go all over it. . . . It is an immense rock with holes and crevices where the water is dripping cool and sparkling. We saw a great many names of persons that had been cut in the rock, but we were so disappointed in not having a dance.”⁵⁴

Rachel Emma Woolley (Simmons)

Age 12, 1848, Brigham Young 1848 company. Reminiscence, circa 1881.

Devil's Gate, Wyoming

“I was six or seven thousand miles from my native land, in a wild, rocky, mountain country, in a destitute condition, the ground covered with snow, the waters covered with ice, and I with three fatherless children with scarcely nothing to protect them from the merciless storms. When I retired to bed that night, . . . I had a stunning revelation. In my dream, my [deceased] husband stood by me and said— ‘Cheer up, Elizabeth, deliverance is at hand.’ The dream was fulfilled.”⁵⁵

Elizabeth Horrocks Jackson (Kingsford)

Age 30, English convert, October 1856, Edward Martin handcart company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

“Devil’s Gate Rock is two perpendicular walls found by measurement to be four hundred feet above the river, which runs through a chasm one thousand feet in length, and one hundred thirty feet in breadth. In this chasm the water tumbles and foams with the noise of a cataract over massive fragments of rock which have fallen from above.”⁵⁶

John Lingren

Age 18, Swedish convert, summer 1863, John F. Sanders company. Reminiscence, 1893.

“Stopped . . . near . . . the Devil’s Gate. The river here has forced a channel through a mountain whose perpendicular rocks rise 400 feet & just wide enough for the river to run. . . . Some boys have ascend[ed] to the top by a rugged path & were seen from below with their feet hanging over the giddy precipice careless of danger and dropping stones into the abyss below, counting the seconds which each took in its fall. This was foolhardy but boys will be boys.”⁵⁷

Lorenzo Brown

Age 25, August 11, 1848, Brigham Young 1848 company. Reminiscence, circa 1856.

“We have been for some days passing ‘the Rocky Mountains.’ They are rather more wonderful than beautiful—yet they are certainly sublime. It seems something marvelous & mysterious that our cavalcade should pass along breaking the eternal silence of these wild places. My feelings are undefinable but there is a degree of awe & sadness about them to me.”⁵⁸

Hannah Tapfield King

Age 46, English convert, August 28, 1853, Claudius V. Spencer company. Reminiscence, circa 1864–1872.

Martin’s Cove, Wyoming

“The time came when we were all too tired to move, so we huddled in our covers, close to each other for warmth. It was snowing and we were so tired. Suddenly we heard a shout, and through the swirling snow we saw men, wagons and mules coming toward us. Slowly we realized that help had come. The wagons brought food and clothing. They hauled in wood for us and as we gathered around the huge fire and ate the delicious morsels of food, we came alive enough to thank the Lord for his mercy to us.”⁵⁹

Sarah James

Age 19, English convert, October 1856, James G. Willie handcart company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

“We were caught in a heavy snowstorm on the Sweetwater, and the last of our flour was gone. The captain called us together, and said that all the provisions were gone, except some few crackers which he had saved for the sick and the small children. . . . Many died from the effect of want and cold, I myself have helped to bury . . . ten to fifteen in a single day. . . . We used to boil the bones [of cattle] and drink the soup and eat what little meat there was. We greedily devoured the hides also. I myself took a piece of hide when I could get it, scorched off the hair on the fire, roasted it a little on the coals, cut it in little pieces so that I could swallow it and bolted it down my throat for supper and thought it was most delicious.”⁶⁰

George Cunningham

Age 16, Scottish convert, October 1856, James G. Willie handcart company. Reminiscence, 1876.

Near Third Crossing of the Sweetwater River, Wyoming

“We traveled . . . on the banks of the river, then halted for noon as the road and the river separated. The road very sandy. . . . We continued our journey and after traveling 6¾ mi[les] we [again] came to the banks of the river. . . . There is plenty of grass on the river banks but no wood. . . . The Sweetwater Mountains appear very plain from here and all the mountains that are in sight are all covered with snow.”⁶¹

Howard Egan

Age 32, Irish convert, June 23, 1847, Brigham Young pioneer company. Trail journal.

“Every day wafts us so much farther from the land of our birth and home of our parents. The idea frequently causes a deep drawn sigh to escape me and almost every morning I find my spirit has been wandering back to the scenes of my childhood and youth, and mingling with the companions of my early days, but oh! Those days are past never more to return.”⁶²

Caroline Barnes Crosby

Age 41, September 22, 1848, Willard Richards company. Trail journal.

Sweetwater Crossing, Jeffrey City, Wyoming

“Came to the Sweetwater where there was an abundance of most beautiful fish. We took a net . . . [and] stopped the train and began fishing. Caught fish sufficient for three hearty meals for the entire camp.”⁶³

Sarah Maria Mousley (Cannon)

Age 29, August 29, 1857, Jacob Hofheins company. Trail journal.

“As we traveled along the Sweetwater River . . . we traveled over bad roads of sand, mud and rocks. So bad was the roads that we could not make much headway.”⁶⁴

Sarah DeArmon Pea Rich

Age 32, September 1, 1847, Charles C. Rich company. Reminiscence, circa 1890-1893.

Fremont County, Wyoming

“I used to see other children running along barefooted, and thought it would be nice to take my shoes off too. But my feet were not accustomed to such rough usage, and I was generally glad to put them on again. . . . Another favorite pastime consisted of walking far enough ahead of the train to get a little time to play; when we would drive the huge crickets . . . and build corrals of sand or rocks to put them in, calling them our cattle. Another inducement to keep ahead of the waggons, was our fear of riding across the creeks and bad places in the road, as the waggons were sometimes upset. In keeping ahead we managed to get across if possible before the teams came up. If the rivers were not too deep we pulled off our shoes and stockings and waded through.”⁶⁵

Mary Jane Mount (Tanner)

Age 10, summer 1847, Abraham O. Smoot-George B. Wallace company. Reminiscence, circa 1872-1884.

“The scenery [is] grand and terrible. I have walked under overhanging rocks which seemed only to need the pressure of a finger to send them down headlong. Many of them resemble the ruins of old castles, and it needs but a little stretch of the imagination to fancy yourself in the deserted hall of a palace or of a temple.”⁶⁶

Jean Rio Griffiths Baker

Age 41, English convert, August 29, 1851, John Brown company. Trail journal.

Rocky Ridge, Wyoming

“We had our first experience at sleeping in the great outdoors—a rather terrifying one until we got used to it. Every single night, it seemed to me, it stormed. The inky darkness would be broken by sudden, blinding flashes of lightning, and the steady howl of the storm by roars of rolling thunder. The seven of us huddled even closer together, but not even tent walls and bed clothes could shut out the blinding flashes of terrific claps of thunder.”⁶⁷

Amelia Eliza Slade (Bennion)

Age 9, English convert, August 1864, Warren S. Snow company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

Rock Creek Hollow, Wyoming

“I took a walk by myself. Passed through some of the most singular looking places I ever saw; it seemed to me that nature in her playful moments had formed curiosities for her own sport.”⁶⁸

Caroline Barnes Crosby

Age 41, August 4, 1848, Willard Richards company. Trail journal.

South Pass, Wyoming

“Ten miles brought us to the south pass. The ascent is quite gradual, so much so that hardly any knew he was going up hill. Altitude of pass 7085 feet. The descent on the west side is more abrupt but still gradual.”⁶⁹

Lorenzo Brown

Age 25, September 3, 1848, Brigham Young company. Reminiscence, circa 1856.

“The road [has been] pretty good the last few days. Prospect wild. Were it not for the lovely skies and pure atmosphere it would be bleak indeed, but they are something heavenly!—different to anything we ever saw in England—reminding me of Byron’s exclamation, ‘So cloudless clear, & purely beautiful, that God alone was to be seen in Heaven!’”⁷⁰

Hannah Tapfield King

Age 46, English convert, September 1853, Claudius V. Spencer company. Reminiscence, circa 1864–1872.

Sweetwater County, Wyoming

“Weather cold, cloudy & wet. Heavy wind & rain most of the night. The wolves howl at night so bad that one sometimes can but think that he is in sectarian purgatory. . . . The wolves took one of Father [Reynolds] Cahoon’s boots from under his wagon & carried it about 1/2 mile where it was accidentally found.”⁷¹

Lorenzo Brown

Age 25, September 1, 1848, Brigham Young 1848 company. Reminiscence, circa 1856.

“Loose fragments of rocks made it very bad travelling. . . . The weather grew cooler towards evening, some large clouds rising in the west which favored the teams considerably. . . . During the day [we traveled] 23¾ [miles], which is the greatest day’s journey we have made since leaving Winter Quarters. The camp was formed by moonlight. There seems to be plenty of feed for teams but no wood for fuel.”⁷²

William Clayton

Age 32, English convert, June 29, 1847, Brigham Young pioneer company. Trail journal.

Near Church Butte, Wyoming

“Our minds were so much delighted with the novelty of the surrounding scenery that we almost forgot we were a little past the meridian of life, and for a moment imagined ourselves mere children, sporting at leisure. All the animal we saw was one little rabbit which ran from us in great fear and a few very pretty birds that seemed [to] make homes in the old cedar trees.”⁷³

Caroline Barnes Crosby

Age 41, August 11, 1848, Willard Richards company. Trail journal.

Muddy Creek Camp, Wyoming

“At Fort Bridger . . . to my great joy, I was able to purchase forty pounds of very fine, fresh beef. I never saw finer in the London markets, and that is saying a good deal. . . . The beef was only ten cents per pound. Travelled on until we came to Muddy Fork and encamped.”⁷⁴

Jean Rio Griffiths Baker

Age 41, English convert, September 19, 1851, John Brown company. Trail journal.

Near Bear River Crossing, Wyoming

“The grandeur of nature filled me with grateful aspirations. The beautiful camping grounds, which were so clean, that one was led to conclude no human foot had ever trodden there. So green was the grass, so delightful the wild flowers, so umbrageous the grounds on the banks of the rivers!”⁷⁵

Louisa Barnes Pratt

Age 45, summer 1848, Brigham Young 1848 company. Reminiscence, 1850-1880.

“Yesterday we travelled till quite late & passed some splendid bluffs ruins. These bluffs are something I cannot describe. They are sublime & mysterious— There is beauty & order in them, and it requires no very fanciful stretch of imagination to form baronial buildings—‘Keeps’—gateways. . . . They are very high— I should like to hear a philosophical description of them— They please and interest me more than [I] have language to express— There is much design in them—yet they say they are solely the work of Nature— Well I must leave them like all mysterious things.”⁷⁶

Hannah Tapfield King

Age 46, English convert, September 10, 1853, Claudius V. Spencer company. Reminiscence, circa 1864-1872.

Echo Canyon, Utah

“We have passed beautiful & sublime scenery, Echo Canyon especially—that surpasses anything I have yet seen before—And some spots yesterday I felt I could live and die in! . . . Beautiful bluffs, beautiful canyons & some things that were anything but beautiful—sorrows & troubles & tears! etc. etc. were mixed up with the beauties of nature.”⁷⁷

Hannah Tapfield King

Age 46, English convert, September 1853, Claudius V. Spencer company. Reminiscence, circa 1864–1872.

“Scenery was varied and changeable. Many curious looking rocks of different shapes and forms were seen on the right hand side of us and on the left hand of the road were to be seen mountains covered with brush and grass while the rocks were adorned with pine trees growing in abundance in all kinds of places where a person would be supposed to think there would be no nourishment. The creek ran down about the middle of the canyon, and in some places it made the road very narrow. On both sides of [the] creek willows grew in great abundance. Their leaves now indicated the season of the year. They were turned to a beautiful orange yellow color.”⁷⁸

Henry Stokes

Age 33, English convert, October 13, 1862, Henry W. Miller company. Trail journal.

“I well remember that when we camped in Echo Canyon that Sister [Sarah] Squires was confined in the morning. She had a lovely baby girl and they named her Echo. The morning she was born the father was running around camp enquiring of everybody if they had a pin to give him to pin something around the baby, but I don't think that he was able to get one. The brethren fixed the wagon very warm and comfortable for Sister Squires and both her and baby arrived safe into the city.”⁷⁹

Patience Loader (Rozsa Archer)

Age 29, English convert, October 1856, Edward Martin handcart company. Reminiscence, circa 1890.

“We camped at the mouth of Echo Canyon on the Weber River, at a small town, Henefer, which was named after the only people living there at that time. Mr. Henefer donated five bushels of potatoes if we would dig them. Fishing was good in the Weber River, and so after the potatoes were dug and the fish caught and cooked, of course, everyone had a treat.”⁸⁰

Daniel Robison

Age 29, summer 1860, Daniel Robison handcart company. Reminiscence, date uncertain.

Big Mountain, Utah

“Our road led us over a very high mountain. . . . Our position commanded a fine view of the country; . . . and in the distance could be seen a hollow, it seemed little more, which we were told was the valley of the Great Salt Lake, and our future destination. How many weary feet have stood on that mountain since and tried to look into the valley, wondering what it held for them. I believe, with us, the one thought was rest, and thankfulness that our journey was nearly over. I wonder as

we near the end our life's journey if we shall gaze into the valley of peace and feel to rejoice that we are nearly there?"⁸¹

Mary Jane Mount (Tanner)

Age 10, autumn 1847, Abraham O. Smoot-George B. Wallace company. Reminiscence, circa 1872-1884.

“We ascended and descended a very high mountain. The teams had all they could do to draw the loads. On arriving at the top we had a glimpse of the valley of Salt Lake which we had so long been striving to reach. We all rejoiced and thought we were the same as there, but when we came to descend the mountain we found we had one of the worst and most crooked roads to pass over that ever was seen. We however got through safely.”⁸²

Caroline Barnes Crosby

Age 41, October 10, 1848, Willard Richards company. Trail journal.

“We came to what is called Big Mountain, and it is rightly named. We had to double teams to get up, that is, take all the teams in camp and put them all on two or three wagons, take them up to the top, then come back for others. . . . Then coming down put them on the back of the wagons to hold them back. Those that came when we did know something of the difficulties of traveling. Five months of that kind gets monotonous, after awhile, but we were near our journey's end . . . [and] could rejoice even withal.”⁸³

Rachel Emma Woolley (Simmons)

Age 12, 1848, Brigham Young 1848 company. Reminiscence, circa 1881.

Between Big Mountain and Little Mountain, Utah

“Of all the splendid scenery, and awful roads, that have ever been since creation, I think this day's journey has beaten them all. We had encamped last night at the foot of a mountain which we had to ascend this morning. This was hard enough on our poor worn-out animals, but the road after was completely covered with stones, as large as bushel boxes, stumps of trees, with here and there mudholes in which our poor oxen sunk to the knees. . . . [But] the grandeur of the scenery, to my mind, takes away all fear.”⁸⁴

Jean Rio Griffiths Baker

Age 41, English convert, September 28, 1851, John Brown company. Trail journal.

“As we gazed down the yawning chasm that lay before us; the narrow road with rocks and bushes on each side, and leading, we could not see where, was a sight to make the strongest heart falter. My mother felt that she was not equal to the task of guiding her oxen down that fearful road, and my father tried to get a man to drive the team down for her. They were all fully occupied with their own teams, and she had to go down the best she could, hanging to the horns of her cattle, and leaving her dress as usual on the bushes to mark her way. I wonder if those coming after knew what those tattered rags meant.”⁸⁵

Mary Jane Mount (Tanner)

Age 10, autumn 1847, Abraham O. Smoot-George B. Wallace company. Reminiscence, circa 1872-1884.

Emigration Canyon, Utah

“As we neared our destination, our journey became wearisome and full of toil. Grass became scarce, cattle began to give out, often, when an ox gave out, a cow was put in its place. The roads were rough, wagons had to be pitched up, till sometimes you would wonder how they could go at all. One of my calamities was my lock-chain giving out, and in going down a hill I had to hold the nigh ox by the horn and tap the off one over the face and keep saying, ‘Whoa, Back; Whoa, Back,’ and nearly hold my breath till I got down to the bottom, then stop, draw a breath of relief, see that all was right, then on again, for others were right on our heels and we had to get out of their way, (you can just imagine what a condition our skirts were in).”⁸⁶

Ann Agatha Walker Pratt

Age 18, English convert, September 1847, Daniel Spencer-Perrigrine Sessions company. Reminiscence, circa 1893.

“The mountains on both sides were so very high and the ravines so crooked that we could not see but a short distance and it looked as though we were shut up in a gulch without any chance for escape. The ground was quite rising for about five miles. . . . After we got to the top of the hill we had a long, steep hill to go down.”⁸⁷

Levi Jackman

Age 49, July 20, 1847, Brigham Young 1847 pioneer company. Trail journal.

Salt Lake Valley, Utah

“I never shall forget the last day we traveled, and arrived in the Valley. . . . When my eyes rested on the beautiful entrancing sight—the Valley; Oh! how my heart swelled within me, I could have laughed and cried, such a comingling of emotions I cannot describe. My soul was filled with thankfulness to God for bringing us to a place of rest and safety—a home. No doubt our valley looks astonishingly beautiful to the strangers who come here now, but it cannot evoke the same emotions as it did to us, poor weary tired, worn out, ragged travelers. When I drove into camp, unyoked my cattle, and sat down on the wagon tongue, and began to realize that, in the morning I would not have to hitch up and toil through another day, such a feeling of rest—blessed rest—permeated my whole being that is impossible to describe, and cannot be realized except by those who have passed through similar scenes.”⁸⁸

Ann Agatha Walker Pratt

Age 18, English convert, September 28, 1847, Daniel Spencer-Perrigrine Sessions company. Reminiscence, circa 1893.

“As we enter the valley of the mountains and look out over the vast land of Zion, I am dismayed by the very immensity of the view. The boundless silence, and to see miles of sage brush everywhere. Behind us now are the heart aches and many thousands of silent tears that fell on the long unknown trail. I remember my dear home in England, of the flowers and trees and beautiful surroundings at that safe home. And I am home sick for my dear mother and father. But just as I have covered those endless hundreds of miles, so now I will begin work with renewed faith, begin the task of building a good home in this new wilderness.”⁸⁹

Mary Pugh Scott

Age 26, English convert, circa August 1848, Heber C. Kimball company. Reminiscence, 1877.

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