

Contributed by Jeff Von Ward

Here, too, is some further information about the Benjamin Hawkins Wagon Company, which you may already have, but which I located through the lds.org "Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 1847-1868" website, which is also proving to be a new favorite url of mine since there's so much great information here!:

Benjamin Hawkins Company (1850)

Departure: 5 June 1850
Arrival in Salt Lake Valley: 9 September 1850
Company Information: 150 wagons were in the company when it began its journey from the outfitting post at Kanesville, Iowa (present day Council Bluffs).

Pioneers included (with ages in parentheses):

[Lee, John Percival](#) (26) [Lee, Eliza Ann Foscue](#) (20) [Lee, John Rupert](#) (4) [Lee, Sarah Lucinda](#) (3) [Lee, Ann Eliza](#) (1)

Source of Trail Excerpt: "Emigration (From the *Frontier Guardian*, June 12th, 1850),"

Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star 15 Aug. 1850, 252-53. **Read Trail Excerpt:** We have attended the organization of 350 wagons of Salt Lake Emigrants up to Saturday 8th inst., Capt. Milo Andrews [Andrus] is a-head with fifty wagons. Next follows, Capt. Benjamin Hawkins with one hundred; Thomas S. Johnson, Capt. of 1st Division, and ---- Capt. of Second Division. We left them at Council Grove 12 miles from Bethlehem west of the Missouri river, on the morning of the 7th inst. Next in succession is Bishop Aaron Johnson with a train of one hundred wagons; Elisha [Elijah] Everett [Averett], Capt. of 1st Division, and Matthew Caldwell, Capt. of the 2nd Division. Next in order is Capt. James Pace with one hundred. Richard Session, Capt. of 1st Division, and David Bennett, Capt. of 2nd Division. The Emigrants are generally well fitted out with wagons and teams, provisions, &c.

There are some wagons quite too heavy. Those brought from St. Louis are good, but too heavy. A heavy wagon with a stiff tongue is unsuitable for the journey. Let no person hereafter buy a wagon for this trip unless its tongue has a joint in the hounds forward of the axletree. Light wagons that will bear from sixteen to twenty hundred pounds, are the most suitable for this service. These heavy lumber concerns should be left here, and not used by our people, neither by anybody else, unless they choose.

The number of California wagons that have crossed at this point, is about 4,500 averaging 3 men to the wagon, making 13,500 men, and about 22,000 head of horses, mules, oxen, and cows.

Our own emigration to Salt Lake Valley will amount to about 700 wagons as nearly as we, at present, can determine. They take two new carding machines in addition to one sent last year, besides much other valuable machinery. They also take about 4000 sheep and 5000 head of cattle, horses, and mules.

With the facilities for improvement that are already in the Valley, and those that are now going, we may expect to see that hitherto, desolate region, growing rapidly into importance, and consideration. Success to the West, and to Western enterprise, to Western men and measures! "Let the Wilderness and the solitary place be glad for them, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Source of Trail Excerpt: "From the Salt Lake Express Mail Company," *Frontier Guardian*, 2 Oct. 1850, 1. **Read Trail Excerpt:**

From the Salt Lake Express Mail Company.
ROCKY MOUNTAINS, 70 Miles west of Fort Laramie, July 28th 1850.

DEAR EDITORS [EDITORS]:--Here we are encamped among the Red Hills so called, the earth nearly red as pains, caused by calcination this being the crater of some vast eruption; and we find the peaks, hills and rocks, thrown into admirable confusion by a tremendous effort of nature.

We have been three days from the Fort, and have had almost constant rain, at least once in twenty-four hours if not all the time, which makes the road very heavy.

Yesterday the weather was exceedingly cold, inasmuch, that a good overcoat and mittens felt well; some hard showers yesterday, and all last night. Yesterday we passed Thomas Johnson's company of fifty wagons, all in good health and teams in good order--left them five miles at the Le-Bonte. Grass was very scarce all day. We left Bishop Johnson's company on the 24th, near the Fort, in fine health and spirits, and teams in good order rolling along fast; and the companies behind are in like good condition and health. We are daily passing tons of Iron strewn all along the road; wagons, carriages, harnesses, saddles, trunks, chests, kegs,--every thing burnt, and the iron strewn on the plains 'tis really a sickening sight. For curiosity we throwed together in a pile, when it was near, and there was more then a wagon load, besides the tire that lie around in every direction.

Friday forenoon we passed a country beautifully sprinkled over with pins; timber to-day has been scarce--only in the creeks, and that is willow. Fort Laramie is a very pretty and a growing place; with a store at hand as well filled as any you can find in the States.

A number of deserters from the Fort were re-captured on Horse Creek, and we met them coming back the next morning. Our captain brought one into camp and gave him food on condition of his returning to the Fort; he said he had eaten nothing for three days, and we learn that there are more still ahead, but pursued. We saw a fine Buffalo yesterday, but did not succeed in capturing him. We have seen no Indians but a few in a village near the Fort; nor do we expect to see any soon.

I must close, an opportunity offers for sending this back. More Anon.
AMICUS.

Source of Trail Excerpt: Clark, John Haslem, *Autobiography of John Haslem Clark*, 4, 6. (Trail excerpt transcribed from "Pioneer History Collection" available at Pioneer Memorial Museum

[Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum], Salt Lake City, Utah. Some restrictions apply.) **Read Trail Excerpt:** In the spring of 1850 we joined Mother's eldest son, George Peacock, who was on his way to Utah with a fine outfit and able to help us. Mother [Mary Noddings Clark] still had the four youngest Clark Children. My brother Thomas was fourteen and I was seven. A young man named Jake Wyrick who was anxious to get to California, helped Thomas get our outfit ready. We had one wagon, one yoke of oxen and two cows.

I rode a large stallion belonging to Jake Wyrick and drove the loose cattle. As I was only seven my legs were so short they would hardly reach across his broad back. At first I was in constant danger of a tumble, but soon grew to be at ease perched up so high where I could look over the miles of weaving grass.

Large herds of buffalo could be seen daily, sometimes feeding, but oftener trailing one behind the other in trails worn so deep by their hoofs they could scarcely be seen. We had fresh buffalo meat most all the way. Sometimes they were killed without leaving the wagon train. We salted enough to last us through the following winter.

We reached Salt Lake City on September 9, 1850 . . .

The next few years were spent making trips to the Missouri River to help emigrants to Utah. There were three other boys and we herded 450 head of oxen at night. We traveled 2000 miles, many nights wet to the skin and depending on the flashes of lightning to see the straying cattle. I made four such trips. Jack Hall was my buddy.

Source of Trail Excerpt: Curtis, Tamma D. M., [Autobiography], in Arthur D. Coleman, comp., *Carter Pioneers of Provo, Utah* [1966], 123. **Read Trail Excerpt:** I [Tamma Durfee Miner Curtis] and my five boys and one girl started with one hundred wagons June 10, 1850. We traveled across the plains with ox teams. We had many a hard struggle although we got along much better than we anticipated.

The first of September we landed in Salt Lake City without any home or anyone to hunt us one, we were very lonesome indeed.

Source of Trail Excerpt: Gifford, Samuel Kendall, *Reminiscences*, 1864, 8-10. **Read Trail Excerpt:** So I started for the Rocky Mountains in the spring of 1850. I went to Council Bluffs and found my mother in Plum Hollow on the east side of the Missouri River. She packed up and I took her with me. We then went to Council Point where I found Uncle Levi Gifford and family who were getting ready for the journey. We staid a few days for them to get ready and then we drove down to the lower ferry below the mouth of the Platte River. Here we found a great many had gathered to be organized for the journey. We were organized into Brother [Benjamin] Hawkins' hundred, Thomas Johnson's fifty. My team consisted of one yoke of oxen, one yoke of three year old steers and one yoke of cows. We crossed the river in a flat boat and camped at the mouth of Salt Creek on the Platte bottom. Here I consider a miracle was wrought for the benefit of the companies that were about to cross the plains. The Pawnee Indians made their appearance by hundreds, and I believe by thousands, for they could be seen standing on the bluffs like a thousand stumps. Quite a lot of them came into camp and commenced begging and stealing, and stole more than they begged. One finally stole a sack of crackers, and got caught at it and brought it back. The old Chief, quite an old Indian gave him a number of heavy licks with his riding whip over the head and gave him a terrible talking to. I suppose it was for getting caught

and not for stealing. About this time it was discovered that a Gentile who had come up on a steamboat and got into our company to cross the Plains was nearly dead with the small pox. This word was soon conveyed to the Redmen who disappeared like dew before the searching rays of the sun. The Cholera also commenced its work in camp and soon we buried a gentile that died of the Cholera and then Peter Shirts' wife died. Then Captain Thomas Johnson called the camp together and said "If you will do as I tell you with regard to the water that you use for drinking I will promise you that there shall not more than five die in this camp with the Cholera. All believed what he said and did accordingly and the strange promise was literally fulfilled, for just five and no more died. While the gold seekers ahead of us and the Saints behind us were dying at a fearful rate. I will now tell about the water. The Platte water being muddy, there had been wells dug all along the Platte bottom to get clear water. The wells were about six feet deep with steps dug to get to the water. The council was this, "To not go near those wells for water but get their water out of the river and drink none without boiling and to fill their churns, teakettles, and everything that they had that would hold water with boiled water to use while traveling. There was in the camp a kind of a fearful looking for the Small pox, as quite a number had been exposed, but no one had it. The Lord had respects to the words of his servant and preserved the camp from farther sickness and death.

Brother Lorenzo Young overtook our camp with a large herd of sheep one day's drive below the south crossing of the Platte. When we came to the crossing we unloaded some of our wagons and took the sheep over in wagons. We had to raise our wagon boxes to cross the river to keep things dry. After crossing, Uncle Levi Gifford, Abram and Iabex [Jabez] Durfee and myself started to accompany Lorenzo Young to help guard his sheep through but we had but traveled one day until word came to us that Aunt Deborah Gifford could not be spared from Johnson camp, so Uncle Levi and myself stopped and waited for the company. I will here state that while I was at Council Point I took a severe Diarrhea and it continued to weaken me down until I was quite weak. We made camp one afternoon on the bank of the river where there was no wood to be got without crossing onto an island. It was perhaps from fifteen to 20 rods across to the island, and a portion of it was quite deep. We took ropes over with us and lashed a lot of wood together leaving rope enough so that we could swim ahead of the wood and pull it after us. When I was within a rod of the shore I commenced sinking. It was discovered by a lot of men on the shore. I had on heavy boots and was very weak and did not realize it till I got into deep water. About the same time a boy a little below was sinking for the third time when some man caught him and brought him to shore.

The horror that reigned in camps ahead of us cannot be described. Sometimes (places) for miles could be seen, feather beds, blankets, quilts, and clothing of every kind strewn over the plains, also wagon tires and irons of every description, gun barrels, stoves, etc. etc. The bottom of the Sweetwater was also lined with wagon tires, chains and other irons. And fresh graves could be seen in every direction. We met some missionaries going east who said they met companies of the gold emigration that were driving twelve abreast, hurrying to get away from the Cholera. Missouri and Illinois were well represented among the dead. These were the two states that had driven the Saints enmass _____ and some of them their bones are now bleaching on the plains.

We continued our journey slowly till at length we camped fifteen miles below Laramie, a small fort where a few of Uncle Sam's soldiers were stationed. Here we found a camp of Indians of the Sioux Nation. These were the first redmen we had seen since the great small pox scare on Salt

Creek. One of my steers became so lame that I had to leave him on the Prairie. I took a widow woman into my wagon and hitched up or yoked up a cow belonging to her and thus we continued our journey. An old man by the name of Richards who had a cancer on his lip, a captain of a ten in our company, got mad because Captain Johnson asked him to help some of the poor by letting them use some of his loose cattle (of which he had a great plenty) to help them on their journey. He took his ten and went ahead of the main compnay and drove to Bitter Cottonwoods in the Black Hills where there was good water, wood and feed. And when Captain Johnson came up a little later with the balance of the company (ie) the main company, Richards behaved like a mad-man. He started out very early the next morning and we saw him no more till we got to Deer Creek. Here Johnson took a halt by the edge of a nice grove of Boxelders, made a coalpit and burned coal, staid twelve days fixing wawgons, setting tires and shoeing oxen etc. I had not got my tire set. I was told that I could wedge them on. The idea was something new to me but I went to work and wedged them till I thought all was safe but I had not gone a half a mile till I had to stop and wedge up again, but I soon learned how to wedge a wagon. I will here mention that I had not been well since I took the Dirreah so bad at Council Point. While stopping at the Boxelder grove on Deercreek we were surrounded with wild currants of every kind, size, and color, and wild cherries in abundance. I ate them both cooked and raw. One day Peter Shurtz [Shirts] and a man by the name of Harns who has since been Bishop of Gunnison went up into the Black Hills some ten or twelve miles and killed a buffaloe and some antelope. And some others took two wheels of a wagon and made a cart of it and went after the meat. While coming down a steep mountain, pulling the cart with an ox team the cart run onto the oxen and broke the tongue of the cart. The men went to camp without the meat. They said the cart was about five miles from camp and that we could go to it and back before dark. It was about the middle of the afternoon. So there was five horsemen and five footmen started out without any lunch, thinking that we could be back to camp for supper. I was among the footmen. We traveled till we had gone at least ten miles. It was getting dark. We went onto a knole in the middle of a large valley. At a great distance across the valley we discovered something while on the side of the mountain and knowing that the cart had a cover onit, we concluded it must be the object of our search. But it looked more like a big rock. So we took the course and kept it as best we could in the dark and when we got there we found that we were not mistaken. We found the cart full of meat, some fresh and good and some spoiled. We found ourselves in a nice grove of pine, fur, popple (Quaking-asp) etc. Here we were without bread and the weather seemed very cold up so high in the mountains. So we built a large fire and broiled meat without salt and spent the night in eating fresh broiled meat and resting ourselves as best we could on the ground before a large fire. When daylight came I discovered that we were surrounded with service berries, the first I had ever [Text missing]

Source of Trail Excerpt: Miner, Mormon, [Autobiography], in *Facts and Fancies of the Glen Bryant Miner and Caroline Eyering Miner Family* [1981], 5. **Read Trail Excerpt:**

She and her family left those scenes of persecution in June of 1850 for Salt Lake City, arriving there the following October. I was then a boy of twelve years, and not having much responsibility resting upon me while crossing the plains, it was more of a pleasure trip to me. I was greatly impressed with the vast herds of buffalo that then roamed over the prairies. So numerous were they that oftentimes they had to be driven away from the road to keep from interfering with the wagon train. Needless to say we had plenty of buffalo meat. Cholera broke

out in the camp while on the plains, and I drove one man's team for two weeks as he was sick and could not drive it. I walked the greater part of that long journey barefoot, and drove loose stock most of the way and slept on the ground.

Source of Trail Excerpt: Nelson, Thomas Billington, Autobiographical sketch [ca. 1902], fd. 273. **Read Trail Excerpt:** My father [Edmond Nelson] left Mt. Pisgah in the spring of May, 1850, for Salt Lake, with a good outfit. We all enjoyed and travelled with the Saints across the plains to Salt Lake. I was then in my fourteenth year. Tom [Smith] Johnson was my company captain. I stood guard twice a week for my father was sick a better part of the time, so my brother William and myself stood his guard all the way across the plains, but we had plenty of good men and women and lots of young folks and plenty of good singers, plenty of music, and lots of preaching, lots of good singing, and praying.

We entered Salt lake a happy band of Saints.

Source of Trail Excerpt: Nelson, Thomas Billington, Life sketch, in Mormon biographical sketches collection [ca. 1900-1975], reel 9, box 11, fd. 1, item 10, 4. **Read Trail Excerpt:** It was on the 8th day of May, 1850, that we started from Mt. Pisgah to Council Bluffs and thence crossed the plains to Salt Lake Valley[.] We started with two good wagons and good ox teams. We also had a number of cows. We traveled pretty much alone until we had come four miles west of Council Bluffs where we found a camp of Saints, and on June 4th the camp was organized with Thomas Johnson as captain.

The following day we were ready to start on our journey west. Ther[e] were fifty wagons in the company. My brother Price [Williams Nelson] met us at Council Bluffs and came to the Valley with us, but Hyrum came in another company later the same year. Our journey was quite a pleasant one. We had good luck, no Indian trouble whatever, and only three deaths occurred in our company on the trip. The first one of these was a woman, the wife of a man named Wilkenson. She was buried on the west side of the mouth of "Ash Hollow." The second was my cousin Dr. Thomas Goforth who was buried a little east of "Chimney Rock." The next, a few days later, was a <little child of a> Brother Borum[.] Melvin Ross and I dug the grave and buried it. These persons were buried in graves made with a vault in the bottom. The bodies were wrapped in a quilt, blanket or wagon cover, whichever could best be spared and would then be placed in the bault [vault], timbers <were then> put across and hay spread over and then covered with dirt. When we were at Sweet Water my Father contracted the mountain fever from which he never fully recovered. While on the plains we saw a great many herds of Buffalo. When they were on their trails leading to watering places, they would not get out of our way, and if they were trailing across our road, we would be compelled to stop our teams until they would have time to pass. But if they were feeding we could not get near them.

We reached Salt Lake City Sept. 9, 1850. We camped on the public square for two days.

Source of Trail Excerpt: Peacock, George, Journal and reminiscences 1851 Nov.-1861 Apr., Journal #1, 6-7. **Read Trail Excerpt:** . . . in March 1850. Left Weston en Route for Salt Lake Utah Territory with A good fit out of two waggons Six yoke of oxen etc. Arived at Kanesville the last of the same month. Tarried at Kanesville untill June when we crossed the Missouri River at Battlehorn taking with me my Mother and 4 of her Children by her Last husband. We where organised into Capt. Thomas Johnson's Company 2nd fifty 1st hundred 1850 Emigration[.] I was Elected Capt of ten[.] we crossed the plains through many fatigues Cholera etc and many died in

the Company[.] we Arrived at Salt Lake City U. T. Sept 10, 1850 Highly pleased with the place and prospects

Source of Trail Excerpt: Tracy, Nancy Naomi Alexander, Reminiscences and diary, 1896 May-1899 July, 37-42. **Read Trail Excerpt:** As I said, we stayed in this place [Winter Quarters] for three years. The third year we began to make preparations to go on our journey. My husband had had three of his brothers come on from the east and two of them were going with us. We had been able to get in better condition to travel this time. We could put two yoke of cattle and one of cows on the wagon and were pretty well fixed for the journey.

There was a widow lady by the name of Bresket who wanted to go with us. We thought she could help me, and so concluded to take her along, but she was very sickley although a very good woman. And then there was a widow [Elizabeth] Lamb that Amos Davis had fitted out with wagon and a yoke of cattle and a yoke of large cows. He wanted my husband to find a driver to take charge of this family and team. There were two little children in this family.

So all being ready, we started out, crossed the Missouri River, and went into camp to wait for the company to be organized. One brother Hawkins was chosen to be captain over 100 wagons, and then a captain was chosen over each of the two fifties' and one over each 10 wagons. Thomas Johnston [Johnson] was over our fifty and my husband was captain over the second ten they organized. In this manner we rolled out. There had been a general rally this year for the great Salt Lake.

We traveled on in this way for days and all went well. We had a good rest while at Council Bluffs. We enjoyed ourselves around the camp fire at night when the moon shone. After supper was over and the work done for the night, they would clear away a place and go forth in the dance for we had plenty of music in camp.

Finally, we got as far as the Platte River. Here they thought it was best to divide the camp into two companies and travel separately in order to travel faster.

The Indians were generally peaceable although sometimes they were a little troublesome, begging around. However, they did not commit any depredations in particular. Once a large band of Sioux came up to where we camped and came inside the corral of wagons. One of the young bucks picked up a sack of crackers and ran off with it. The chief was informed of this, and he soon brought him back with the crackers and gave him a tremendous whipping over his naked head and shoulders.

While we were traveling along the Platte River, the men thought they would stop and give the cattle a rest and have a buffalo hunt for the buffalo were quite numerous. In the meantime, the women could do their washing and baking. We camped in a little skirt of timber. The next morning the men started out to hunt. It was a very hot day, but the men came in at night loaded with meat. However, there was a young man, Charley Jensen, the widow Lamb's teamster, who, when he came in was so thirsty and hungry that he could not wait for supper, and so cut a piece of raw buffalo meet and ate it. The poor fellow, that night he was taken with cholera and died next morning. The brethren worked all night with him but could not save him. His groans were heart-rending to hear. They dug a deep grave, rolled him up in blankets, and buried him there. They could do no better under the circumstances.

When we made ready to move on, we discovered that one of the widow Lamb's cows was missing. They hunted for her but could not find her and finally came to the conclusion that Indians had driven her off. So we had to go on without her and had to leave poor Charley in his lonely grave. My oldest son then had to drive the widow's team. The large wolves followed us that morning for they were very numerous.

We went on without further incident till we passed Fort Larimie when one evening there came two deserting soldiers into camp. They began to travel with us, saying that they could stand it no longer at the fort. They traveled two days with us, and then were overtaken by officers from the fort. Poor fellows! they might easily have been protected, but there was a reward up for them and our captain delivered them up. They were strapped to horses and taken back to receive their punishment. My husband and our captain had quite an argument about it. It was indeed cruel, but a little money was tempting for it was scarce.

There began to be considerable sickness in camp and some deaths. Peter Shirts, captain of the first ten, had to bury his wife by the wayside. Abram Durphy [Durfee] buried one of his children, and there were others who died.

There were two emigrants traveling with us bound for California. One of them came down with small pox and died, but there were such precautions taken that no one else took it. However, the whole camp was vaccinated, and some were quite sick. I was, myself.

Well, those were very long and toilsome days. Still we plodded on until they had to stop for rest. The cattle were giving out and becoming footsore and had to be shod. So we stopped in the country of the black hills for twelve days. There was water and plenty of timber, but previously to this, they sometimes had to tie up the cattle at night without feed or water. But here there was good feed and water and the poor animals surely needed it for they were about worn out. My two cows had given milk all the way and worked in the yoke besides, and so when there was no other alternative, we could drink their milk. But they were failing in this now. So we camped and overhauled and cleaned up generally while the men were busy shoeing the cattle and making tar out of the fat pines for the wagons for pine trees were abundant. When they got through with all this, they spent the time hunting until we were ready again to move on. They killed elk and deer; so we had meat. But O the wolves! At night they made the air hideous with their howling. Of course, we always kept a guard at night ever since we started, and this was telling on the men. Many a time when my husband was on guard along the Platte River, I have gone out with some nourishment even if it were nothing but a hot potato.

There was one circumstance I forgot to mention in its proper place. We had to cross over one fork of the Platte River. It was one quarter of a mile wide. We had to pile everything as high as we could in the wagon and then sit on top. The water was shallow at first but grew deeper as we got into the stream. Of course, the men had to go in the water to guide the teams and hold on to the ox bows. The water came up to their shoulders and was very chilly. But we got across safely and unloaded the fifty wagons and crossed back to bring a herd of sheep over. That meant that the men had to cross the ugly stream three different times. Then we had to stop over one day in order to dry the things. I was glad we saw the last of that river as I also was when we rolled out of our camping ground in the Black Hills, although we had a good rest there.

We were now on the last half of our journey and began to feel anxious to get to our final stopping

place. My husband was beginning to feel the wear of the trip severely.

Memory fails to think of anything worthy of note as we traveled on, although there was one place I remember well. The wagons had to be let down an embankment into a stream and had to travel on some distance in the stream before they could climb the bank to the road again. The men in letting the wagons down the bank into the stream had to tie strong ropes to the back of the wagons and several of them had to pull back on the ropes so as to let the wagons down easily. It took some time and was slow work but was accomplished. I often think how different the mode of travel is now to what it was at that time in 1850, and it is now 1895.

The travel became slower and more fatiguing. At last we got to the crossing of the Green River. The river ran on very swift and looked angry and deep. The first ten drove in. There was one Brother Gifford who held on to his ox bow till he lost his hold and went down. He could not swim but one of the Brethren went to his rescue and brought him out more dead than alive but he was brought around after a while. The rest got across safely and moved on toward the mountains that we were now approaching. In a few days, we began to raise the heights of the big mountain and reached the summit. When we did reach the top, we were struck with amazement as we gazed at the valley below, the long sought for place of rest. O how beautiful and grand the valley, dotted with dwellings and with the Great Salt Lake sparkling in the sunlight, appeared. We feasted our eyes upon the scene. It looked like paradise after three months of toil through the hot summer. We were about to reap the reward of our labors. We had found a place of rest far away from our enemies and those that had persecuted us and shed the blood of the Saints and prophets of the most high. Here we could live and worship God and keep his commandments. Will they let us alone now or will they follow us? Time alone will tell.

On the 12th day of September, 1850, we came down into Salt Lake City.

Source of Trail Excerpt: Tracy, Nancy M., "Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent*, Feb. 1910, 55-56. **Read Trail Excerpt:** We had school and meetings and the winter passed off very agreeably. The Saints would go forth in the dance, and the Spirit of God was with them, and we felt to rejoice, for there was none in our midst to prohibit us from worshipping God according to the dictates of our conscience.

We did not fear our enemies, and had the red men for our neighbors; and they were very civil that winter. Our old Nauvoo friend, Amos Davis, came through and called on us. He was traveling through to Kanesville with goods. We made him as comfortable as we could, and he was glad to see us. When he left he gave us tea, sugar and rice that lasted all winter. We felt it a God-send to us in those close times.

We did not leave this place as we expected in the spring. We lived here for three years and raised grain and vegetables and did well. My seventh son was born here the second winter that we lived here; and when we left to go west we were fitted up with two yoke of oxen and one yoke of cows both of them giving milk, when we started out. We crossed over the Missouri river and went into the camp of the Saints, for there was a general rally to move on this spring. One hundred and eighty-five gathered on the bluffs to organize the camp. There were one hundred wagons to move on in our company, Brother Hawkins captain of the hundred. Then there were captains of fifties and of tens. Thomas Johnson was over the fifty that we were in.

After all was made ready we started out on our toilsome journey to the Rocky Mountains; this

was about the tenth of June 1850. My husband was then called as captain over two tens.

Traveling was very slow, in consequence of new roads and lengthy train of wagons. We took a widow with us by the name of Bracket. We traveled on until we came to the Platte river country without any sickness, but sometimes the Indians would come into camp and steal. At one time a young Indian got away with a sack of crackers. The old chief brought him back into camp and whipped him severely before the camp. This was while we were near the Platte, in the buffalo country. The men thought they ought to rest their teams for a day or two, and have a hunt. Several went out, the weather was very hot, and the water bad. They came in at night loaded with buffalo meat. One young man, Charlie Johnson, was taken with the cholera that night and died at daybreak. He was rolled up in a blanket and buried in a deep grave, so the wolves could not dig him up, for they were very numerous. This was the first commencement of cholera in the camp. After this there were several deaths in the company, some of cholera and some of other complaints. At last one died of smallpox, but so much caution was used that no one else took it, nearly all were vaccinated.

We continued our journey now, but the camp was divided into fifties and traveled in two companies, they would travel with more comfort than with such a large company. We came on to the Black Hills. There were deserted soldiers came into camp and plead to travel with us, but they were soon overtaken by their officers and strapped on horses and taken back to quarters, and I suppose had to pay the penalty.

The camp stopped in the Black Hills to let the cattle rest and put shoes on them, for their feet had become so sore and tender they could not travel. We stayed here twelve days. The men killed elk and deer until we were all supplied. It was salted and dried over the smoke, so it would keep for the rest of the journey. While we were here, the wolves would make the night hideous with their howling. There were panthers here, too, and I was glad, for my part, when we left the place, for I did not fancy this kind of enemies, so we left them, as we did those who had robbed us and driven us from our possessions and homes. The journey was long and tedious, sometimes having to camp without wood or water. I have seen the cattle tied up at night after traveling all day without feed or water. We had two cows that worked in the yoke all the time, but they gave us milk, so when there was no water we could drink their milk for supper. The traveling became more slow and fatiguing every day. When we got to the crossing of the Green River it ran very swift, it looked deep and angry. Among the first that went in to the river was one Brother Gifford. He hung on to the bows as long as he could, but lost his hold and the current took him down. Some few had got across, and one of the brethren jumped into the stream and swam to his rescue, and fetched him ashore. He was nearly gone, but came around all right after a while. The rest all got over without any accident, and moved on towards the mountains that we were now nearing. At last we began to raise their heights and reach the summit, and look down into the valley below, the goal of our destination. It looked like a paradise, dotted with dwellings and gardens. Our eyes dwelt and hearts feasted upon the lovely scene after three months of hard toil and travel and under all circumstances of a trying nature.

On the 15 of September we came into Salt Lake City. We camped for a few days at the west of the city to look around and rest and see where to make a home. My husband's health was very much impaired by our long journey and constant exposure, and cold weather coming on; we traveled north eight miles to Sessions Settlement to get better feed for our stock and camped for three weeks. My husband and son went into the mountains and got out wood and sold to get

something to live upon. The crickets, which had made such havoc in the crops left some, but provision were hard to get, as this was the third year that ever anything had been attempted to be grown in the desert land.