

THE JOURNEY OF A MORMON FROM LIVERPOOL TO SALT LAKE CITY

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John Johnson Davies was born December 28, 1831, in Carmarthen, South Wales. He was one of ten children of a poor stone cutter, John Davies and his wife, Sarah Lewis Davies. When he was eight years old his father died and the following year John Johnson was apprenticed to a weaver under whom he learned that trade. On completing his apprenticeship he travelled for a year working at his trade after which he returned home. About a year later he joined the Mormon church and was baptized on the next day, January 10, 1853. He described his activities for the succeeding year in his own quaint way stating that "I traveled a good deal with the Elders to bear my testimony, and to help them in singing." On October 3, 1853, he married Mariah Davies, the daughter of Henry and Martha Davies, and a few months later they began preparation for the long journey to "the valleys of the mountains".¹

The following account of the pilgrims' journey to the west should be of value to those interested in the establishment of Mormonism in Utah, to those interested in social history, and to those interested in the development of the American frontier:

We got to Laverpool [Liverpool] on the 2nd. of Feb. 1854. My Father and Mother in law and myself and my wife started to the valleys of the mountains on the 4th. of February, in the ship Colcondah a sailing vessel, there was 464 saints on board. The ship was taken out to the

¹The editor is indebted to Mrs. L. Paul Rasmussen, Salt Lake City, Utah, for permission to copy the account of her great grandfather's journey to Utah from the autobiographical sketch of his life.

oppen sea by a steamer, and then we was left on sea, to the mercy of God, thare was one thing that gave us joy and satisfaction, we knew that God would protect us on the sea. And after the steamer left us, then the ship was in full sail and she looked handsome and she ploughed the main very fast We had a brass band, and a choir I was a member in both of them. Our Captain was verry kind to us espeshily to the sick, but verry little sickness we had on sea, and only one death, and that was an infant, indeed it was sollum time with us when the child was dropped into the sea. Our President was Elder Curtis, he was returning from his mission, he organized us, and appointed teachers to look after us. We had a good voiage, and but one storm, and it was a fearful one, and i shall never forget it, it lasted about 4 hours, and quite about dark, the next the ship was in full sail again, and we all felt to rejoice for fine Weather once more, and i can tell you my friends that we did feel to rejoice we had the pleasure to see a Weding on sea, and we had a fine time.

And when we got through the Gulf of Mexico, the Captain said [“]ship about[”] then we traveled North East until we got to that River Mississippi, here a steamer came to us and towed us up that mighty river. We got to New Orleans on the 18, of March. We made the trip in six weeks from Laverpool to this place, it is about one hundred miles from the mouth of the Mississippi to New Orleans, and we was glad to get thare. We started again for St. Louse [Louis] in a small boat.

Now we are going yes faster and faster the steam boat a puffing, and snorting, and pushing hard against the stream. But Oh. What a durty water for us to use We dip it up for to settle it, but donet get much better Never mind, we will do the best we can with it I must drink it Enney how, because I am very thirsty And what a rackity noise, it makes me shudder The captin a shouting and the water a splashing And the band a playing, and some of us a singing And some of the sisters a washing, and the babes a crying

And the sailors a talking, and some of them smocking
And all of us trying to do something
And the little boat a tugging and snorting

When traveling up these rivers it was a great site to us, to see
Such forest of timber and land. We got to St. Louis about
is the 10th. of April 1854, but what a dirty looking place
this is, and when we got on shore, we had a great and
sad site, to see the negroes Working, rousing the cotton
bails. The boss that was looking After them used them
verry ruff with a whip in hand.

We stayed two weeks in St. Louis, here the cholera started
Among us and we buried a few of us in this place.

We started from St. Louis on the 24, of April, 1854,
and after we got started the captain of the boat said, put
on more steam and away she gose. We had a good view
of the country, and it was a great site to us because most
all of us was treads men from the workshop, and that
is the reason, that so much traveling through this country
was interested to us. We had to stop a few times to bury
the dead while going up the river. We got to Kansan, Mis-
souri in the month of May the distants from St. Louis to
Kansas is aboute 4 hundred miles. This place was a trading
post in them days one or two stores and a few houses, but
now a great city. The cholera was verry bad amongst us
by this time. We buried quite a few of our Brethern and
Sisters in this place, it was here i buried my Father and
Mother in law we stayed in these camps six weeks. We
whent to West Port and stayed here a few days to get
ready to start on the plains. Now comes the labor and toil,
for a people that as [has] no experience whatever [.] Yes,
my freinds more than a thousand miles accross this great
Plains, and also those great mountains, before we would
get to the valleys of the mountains. Oh yes we had a fine
time to see the Negroes breaking the young steers for the
company.

We started on the plains on the first of July, 1854.
We traveled along the best we new how, for many a day.
Now I will relate a few things that happen to us on the

Plains, between Westport and Larime [Laramie] . The first night we camped it was at Indian Creek, and between twelve and one oclock in the night, my wife gave birth to a daughter in a tent and at eight oclock in the morning we rouled out again. We traveled 25 miles and camped for the night. Now I will tell you about the sircuse [circus] that we had the first few days on the plains [.] Our captain told us in the evening to get up early in the morning for to get ready to start in good time, and after breakfast was over, we got the cattle together, and tryed to yoked them up. i can assure you that this was quite a task for us, and after we got theme itched [hitched] to the wagon, we started out. Now comes the sircuse, and it was a good one, the captain was waching [watching] , and telling us what to do, he told us to take the whip and use it and say woo ah duke gee brandy and so on. Now the fun commenced, then we whent after them prety lively, and when the cattle whent gee too much, we would run to the off side, and yelling at them, woo ah, and bunting And we was puffing and sweeting [sweating] for all was out this was a great experience to us and indeed a tuff one, but by the time we got half way accross the Plains, we could drive the ox teame as well as you can enny day.

Thare was ten persons to every wagon. Thare was 6 men in my wagon, three of them left me at Fort Kearney, and two was sick in the wagon, and one died on the road [,] we buried him next morning. I had to drive my teame all the may to the valleys alone i done it all right. I had a big red boil under my right arm which gave me great pain. We had plenty of grass, but very little wood on the Plains, the women gathered buffalose chips to make fier to cook for to have something to eat. We traveled a few days more and got a Ash Hollow, which was [a] verry bad place to go down to the bottom of the Platte River, which is 150 miles from Fort Kearney, and Fort Kearney is between 2 or 3 hundred miles from the Missouri river. When we was on the Ash hollow hill, the wagon wheel went over a boy's head and he came verry near loseing

his life, the Elders administered to him and he got better [,] his name is Johnathan Prothro. We had to lock both wheels to go down this hill. We camped for the night on the bottom of the Platte river. Next morning we was off again, and after i got out aways from this place the wagon wheel went over my foot i took some oil and annointed my foot and in a short time it was all right.

In camp after supper we had some singing and chatting, and at nine oclock we had prayers, then we'd go to rest. Thare was fifty wagons in the train, we had besides the captain of the trine [train] , five more chosen [,] one for every ten wagons, to tell us what we had to do. On one day when traveling on the road, we had a stamped [e] , the teams started out on the run, and they tangled up fast together. It was a wonder that no one was kild, and nothing brock [broke] , then we parted them and itch [hitched] them up again and traveled a few miles and camped for the night. We had another one, but this one was in the night, while they was in the corral, the captain was afraid of Indians that night [,] we made corralls with the wagons every evening, the cattle that night bunted the wagons pretty lively and the captain shouted to the gard to let them go, and they went out on the run. Next morning after breakfast we got them together. Some of them was 15 miles away, we traveled a few miles that day. Next morning we rouled out again, when looking towards the West we could see the chimney rock, we thought we could get to it that day, but took two days [,] it did look like a chimney. My wife had a gathered brest. She was sick for a long time, i got the Elders to administered to her and she receved the blessing and got well. The buffalose on the plains in them days was by tens of thousands. The boys wounded a young bull and he came a snorting and crossed the road between the wagons, but the boys down him and fetched one quarter to camp [,] So much of [for] the plains.

The night before we came to Fort Larime we camped a few miles from the Fort, this Fort is located on the south side of the North Platt at the foot of the Black hills it

being 550 miles west of the Missouri River, and in the morning we rouled out toward the Fort and in a short [time] after we started, we passed a large camp of the Suix [Sioux] Indians [,] we passed the Fort and camped by the river Platt fore noon. The dainish train that was behind us came along the same day, and the Indians kild one of their cows. The dainish captain tould the military captain about it, then the military captain send [sent] a few of his soldiers to see the Indians about it, and they got to a disbuite [they got into a dispute] and they fired at one another and they had a fight. The dainish captain came along to us and said that the Indians was on the war path, he tould our captain to wait for his train to come up. The trappers and traders also was coming toward us for dear life. We all crossed the river all right. We had a large camp that night, we thought we would haft to fight, but the Indians had their reveng [e] with the soldiers. We camped together for a few nights then we sapperated We did not see no more Indians until we came to Salt Lake City.

Now we are in the black hills and in a few days travel, we got to the Red bute we jog along again, passed the willow spring, also the Cayote spring, and from here to the Independent Rock, here we struck the sweet watter, the next place was the davel's gate. Next was the rocky Ridge, this ridge his [is] the back bone of the Rocky mountains, the streams run from here in all directions, here where the South Pass is we are still agoing through the hills, until we reach little sandy and next place was big sandy. Right here that lot Smith burnt the wagons with supplies for that great American Army that was sent by the government to punish the latter day saints. The next place was green River, the next place was Fort Bridger, where that great army spent the winter of 1857, and they stayed thare because they was oblidged too. The distants from this Fort to Salt Lake City in one hundred and 13 miles [,] the distance from Fort Larime to Salt Lake is between 4 and 6 hundred miles.

We bid goodby to the old Fort, and traveled along the best we could untill we got through the Emmigration canyon, then we could see the valleys of the mountains, which made us to rejoice and to thank the Lord for his blessings to us on the journey [.] We got to the City of the Saints a few days after the October Conference of 1854 [.] We rould through the City with joyfull hearts, and camped on the Emmigration Square west of the temple block, and we all felt to rejoice.