Sarah Loader Holman

The last survivor of one of the great pioneer treks of history.

Low, bitter cold weather, sickness, and death marred by the food and water running low, bitter cold weather, sickness, and the eventual death of sixty of their fellow passengers. The ship arrived in New York near the last of winter. The emigrants pooled their money and rented a storage house to live in until preparation could be made to continue their journey. Most of them secured work of various kinds to supply the necessary means with which to continue on to Utah, their "land of Zion."

In June, they started their journey west in cattle cars on the railroad. At times they made good progress, but at other times they camped for days beside the railway tracks waiting for a train to take them on. Upon arrival at Iowa City, Iowa, the end of the railroad, they found that they could not leave because the handcarts from St. Louis, which were to carry their belongings, had not yet arrived. It was the latter part of July before these came, and the hurried preparations for the trip were completed, as other families joined the group. Two handcarts were allotted to the Loader family. One was pulled by Mr. Loader and Mr. Jaques, and the other by the four Loader girls. These carts were two-wheeled with a pair of shafts in front and a crossbar. The two older sisters got between the shafts and pushed on the bar, while the two little girls pulled on ropes tied to the bar.

The food was carefully rationed, carried in ox-driven wagons, and apportioned each day. Each family took a tent, and were allowed to take a total of seventeen pounds a person of clothing, cooking utensils, and personal effects. Many were the heartaches as prized possessions they had carried so far had to be discarded. On top of the cart pulled by the men were perched the sick mother and the eldest sister who was expecting a baby very soon.

It was a sight seldom seen when on that July morning six hundred and twenty people, pulling all of their earthly possessions in handcarts, faced the West and thirteen hundred miles of prairies, mountains, and Indians. Mr. Savage, an experienced frontiersman, said it was too late in the season to start, for an early winter could overtake them before they reached their destination. But the group insisted on going. Hearts were happy and feet light as permission to start came from Edward Martin, their leader, for they thought only of the peace and prosperity that seemed to lie ahead.

At first all went well, but days lengthened into weeks, mornings of hope changed to nights of despair; there were sickness and death, but the march had to continue. Never was there a day spent in rest except the Sabbath.

One evening just as the company was preparing to camp, the married daughter said that her time had arrived. The family tent was erected, and all possible done to welcome the new child into the world. No anesthetics or doctor were available, not even a bed to lie on. All night they worked, and early the next morning the baby was born. A small supply of food was left with the family, and the company went on. Fear of Indians and wolves helped the lone family to forget the heat of the summer day, but the fear of not overtaking their comrades was even worse.

When night came, the two men took turns standing guard to watch for Indians and wild animals.

At daylight the next morning, they prepared to continue. Their belongings were loaded on the carts, the two sick women and the new-born babe were made as comfortable as possible on the load, and they started. All day long they hurried on. As evening approached, they paused to eat a frugal meal, then continued on their way. The country was so level they could see the campfires of the company miles ahead of them, and at midnight in a state of exhaustion, they joined the group.

From this time on, Mr. Loader began to weaken. Sundays, when the party pushed on. The sick and the weak had to go, too, as it was a race of life and death against the cold of winter, for it was getting dangerously late in the season. As they approached Ash Hollow in western Nebraska, the family made good progress, but managed to travel seventeen miles his last day of walking. The following morning he was unable to rise, so friends lifted him and placed him on top of the girls' cart, and occasionally the mother helped pull. They hauled him all day, and at evening left him on the cart, for he had gone beyond all hope. Early the next morning they dug a shallow grave in the sand, wrapped the body in a blanket and hurriedly buried him in an unmarked grave. The journey must go on regardless of personal feelings or sufferings.

When they arrived at the Platte River, an early winter had set in. Their progress was hampered by a heavy snowstorm, and the river was partly frozen over. The two little girls in front started out on the ice, but Sarah said, "We would rather push than pull." So they got behind the cart and reached the company. The two older girls, off the ice and into the river. The water was waist deep, but the entire company crossed safely and had to let their clothes freeze dry during the day. They were further delayed by the handcarts breaking down, caused by the unseasoned timber from which they had been built. The farther they went, the worse this trouble became.

Food also became a serious problem. Because the bacon was gone and wild game had been scarce, flour had to be rationed in the amount of one pound to each adult, and one-half pound to each child. This made eleven biscuits a day.

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SARAH LOADER HOLMAN

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for the entire Loader family. The deep snow made travel extremely slow, so it was an act of Providence when a man with a wagon came along and took the young Jaques couple and the new baby on with him. The four younger girls and their sick mother had to take care on with him. The four younger girls continued. During the last nine days they had to build a fire to soften the frozen ground. They dragged him inside and wrapped him as best they could, and then crawled into their own beds to await death. To a girl twelve, this was a horrible thought, but it seemed inevitable. During the night the man died, and the next morning hardly enough strong men got up. With a little more urging the other girls also arose.

One man from the company volunteered to climb to the top of the next hill to see if he could see the rescue wagons coming. When he returned, the despair on his face answered the one question on every lip. Toward evening he felt strong enough to try it again. Upon reaching the summit, he began to wave his arms and shout that help was at hand. All who were able came out of their tents and started out to meet the drivers. Men fell on each other, kissed and shouted for joy. Women and children cried. This was indeed a resurrection. Soon frozen loaves of bread were tossed out and in the terms of Sarah Loader, “Nothing ever tasted so good before or since.”

With the food came hope, and the next morning they loaded the sick and the weakest into the wagons, and continued westward. The four children, still pulling their handcart with their few belongings, trudged behind. The mother was now riding in a wagon. Each day they would meet more help, and just before reaching Salt Lake City, the children were picked up. They abandoned the handcart which had carried all their earthly possessions for two thousand miles across the pioneer trail, and rode into the valley in comparative comfort, where they arrived the last of November.

Perhaps Ezra Meeker was right when he said of the pioneers, “The weak died, and the cowards turned back.” Out of the six hundred and twenty, death had taken almost one-third of the company in the last month of the trip.

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ACCOMPLISHMENT should always be the result when energy is expended. Yet, like a dizzily spinning top, many businesses go round in the preparation of advertising and get nowhere. Month after month, the same thing happens again and again and nothing is accomplished but the expenditure of dollars that could be made to produce results. The function of a printing organization today is to help clients to plan printing that builds sales—to take copy and dramatize it, make it so irresistibly attractive that it must naturally draw the reader’s attention. The waste of which we speak is often due to lack of understanding. Realization of this has made us sales minded. Your selling problem is our problem, and our experience puts us in a position to print your sales story so that it will get results.

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MINER MIKE SAYS

"Recently the Newmont Mining Company, one of the nation's largest mining companies, announced its intention of developing certain mineral ground in Utah. We should encourage more outside capital to take a hand in development of our resources. For each dollar of ore produced, 90c stays in Utah."

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Sarah Loader’s hardships were not over yet, for the family had to separate and each work for a living. Later she went with a married sister and family to Snake River valley in Idaho, where she was soon married and built what was said to be the first house in the state to have a wooden roof.

When asked if they suffered much in pioneering the new state, she said, "Oh, some were poor, and some were rich."

"Whom did you consider as being rich?" she was asked, and she replied, "Anyone who could eat all the bread he wanted each day was considered rich."

On the night in February when I heard her story, Sarah Loader Holman was living in a substantial, comfortable home. Within a few miles were her nine children, sixty-eight grandchildren, and nineteen great-grandchildren, all of whom are respected citizens. Surely her dream when a little girl of twelve had come true—love, security, and peace enveloped her.

THE STAFF OF LIFE

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The Lord says, this revelation is our health all to this. We can point with pride to our educational statistics; we may quote our health statistics; we may name numerous athletes. But this is not enough.

The "Mormon" people have made an enviable record because they have abstained from liquor and tobacco. What might we be if we kept the whole Word of Wisdom! Factors that help us obey the sections of the revelation about liquor and tobacco are the immediate bodily effects as well as the stench, to say nothing of the expense and slavery. Eating in accordance with the advice about food is so simple, and all that happens is that we feel normal and well. If every time we didn’t eat enough grain during the day to equal "the staff of life" and ate insufficient amounts of "wholesome herbs" which the Lord says he "hath ordained for the constitution, nature and use of man," and "the fruit of the vine, that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground." we had immediate noticeable effects, perhaps we could keep these sections of the law more easily.

I have been rebellious when I have become ill and blamed the Lord because I "kept the Word of Wisdom." since I did not smoke or drink. Now I know better. It will be hard for me to live above years and years of careless eating habits, but I am hoping because I am now learning to obey this law to the fullest possible extent, that I will live to fill the measure of my creation; that when my time comes the Lord can call me home quietly—not have to rescue me from some pain-filled death that makes us acutely aware of the fact that death is a blessing.