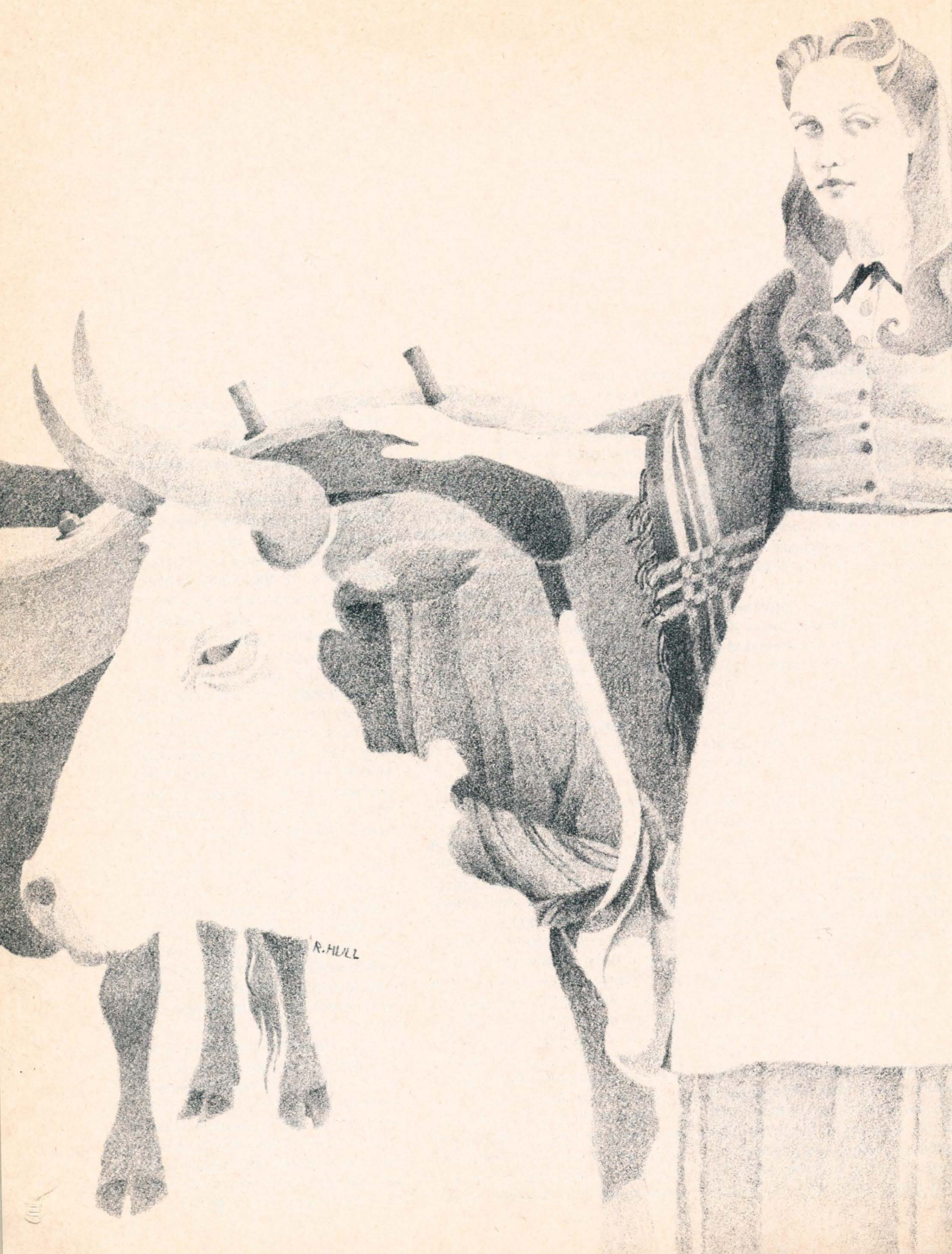


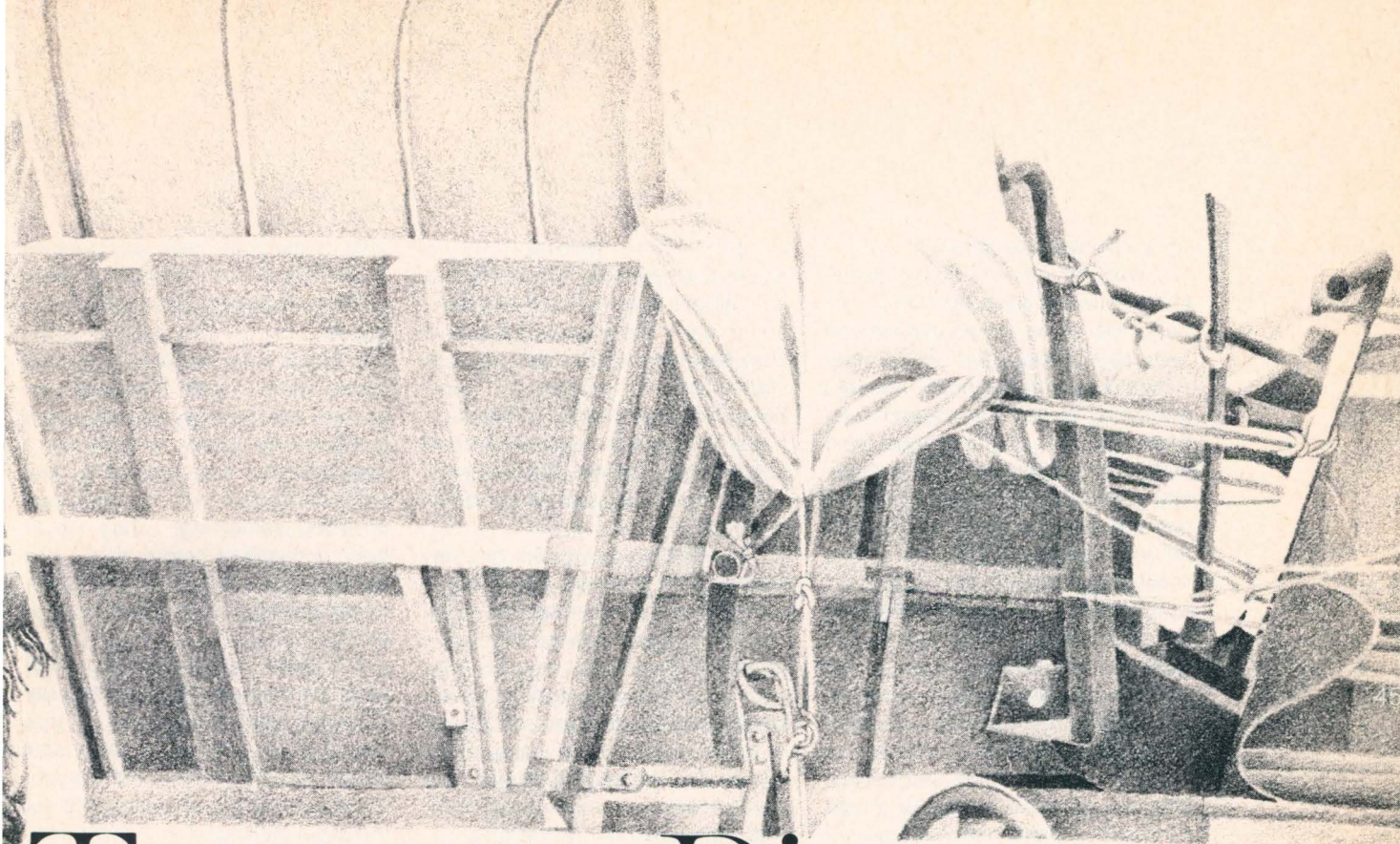


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R. HULL



Teenage Pioneer

The Adventures of Margaret Judd Clawson

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Illustrated by Richard Hull

THE Margaret Judd, a 17-year-old
74 who crossed the plains with
her family in 1849, the year of
the gold rush, wrote an account of
the experience that is vivid and dis-
plays a sense of humor. Margaret
was born in Ontario, Canada, where
her parents joined the Church when
she was five. In *Rambling Reminis-
cences of Margaret Gay Judd Claw-
son*, written 60 years after the trek,
Margaret recaptures her interests
and impressions as a teenager
going to Utah to fulfill her family's
dream of gathering with the Saints.
Three years after arriving in Salt
Lake City, Margaret, then just short
of her 21st birthday, became the
second wife of young Hiram B.
Clawson, who became a prominent
merchant and businessman and the
manager of President Brigham
Young's financial interests. One of

Hiram and Margaret's sons, Rudger,
became president of the Quorum of
the Twelve. Margaret died in Salt
Lake City in 1912 at the age of 81.

"After the Saints left Nauvoo, my
parents doubled their exertions to
get an outfit to go to the Rocky
Mountains. In the meantime Father
had one or two quite sick spells
which put him back considerably.
How well I remember what a hard
time he had breaking in the animals
to draw the wagon. There were six
cows and two oxen. The oxen were
well broken and quite sedate but the
cows were wild and unruly. He
would get help to yoke them up, and
then would start to drive them. All at
once they would run off in an oppo-
site direction to where he wanted
them to go, or would run around to
the back of the wagon and get all
tangled up.

"Well, this went on for days and
days, and while Father was break-
ing the cattle, Mother was praying.
She told me afterwards that many
nights when we were in bed asleep
she would go out into the orchard
at the back of our house and there
pour out her soul in prayer, asking
the Lord to open the way for us to
go with the Saints. She was willing
to share in their privations for the
sake of being with them.

"Another source of anxiety to
her was that I was in my teens, at
the romantic age of seventeen, and
Mother knowing the susceptibility of
the human heart, was afraid that
some young man might persuade
me to think more of him than I did of
her, and induce me to remain there.
She could not live away from the
Church and she could not leave a
child behind. So my parents said we

must not stay any longer.

"Well, after weeks of hard work, Father had the cows broken so that he could drive them and on the ninth day of May, 1849, my brother Riley's sixteenth birthday, we said good-bye to our friends and relatives, got into our wagons, and started on our long, eventful journey. Oh, how Mother's countenance beamed with joy! What did she care for hardships, if she could only reach the goal?

"One of many little romances—the night before we left, my true lover, Henry Ridgley, came to bid me farewell, and under our trysting tree (a big tree close by) we each vowed eternal constancy—for four years at least. At the end of that time he would be of age, and then he would come to claim me for his own, even if I was at the end of the earth. Well, he *did* come to see me, but it was *forty* years after instead of four years. He had a wife and three children. I had a husband and was the mother of *thirteen* children. . . .

"Our first night out after starting on our journey, we camped on the prairie; Father had unyoked the cattle and turned them out to feed on the grass. He had to look after them to keep them from straying away. We had picked up enough fuel to make a good fire and Mother was getting supper, when all at once there came up a most terrific thunderstorm. The rain poured down in torrents and we were all drenched. Although we got into the wagon as soon as we could, the wind blew the rain with such force that the wagon was very little protection. Of course, the fire was put out and it was cold comfort for supper *that* night. However, the next morning the sun shone bright, everything got dry, and we jogged on our journey.

"I don't remember how long we were getting to Council Bluffs [Iowa] but I do remember that we camped there one month waiting for

companies to be made up. They had to be organized for protection against the Indians. Oh, the monotony of camp life when not traveling! How delighted we all were when we started on our journey for good. Everything was bright and beautiful. I was young and healthy. All was *color de rose* for me. The responsibilities, anxieties, and cares rested on my parents.

"In traveling as we did, one day was very like another. After jogging along all day we camped at night. The men took care of the cattle while the women got supper. After that was over the young folks generally made a bonfire and sat around it, talked, told stories, sang songs and so on. There were several nice young men in our company, which made it interesting for the girls.

"On the Fourth of July we camped for the day, not entirely to celebrate, but to wash and do mending and various other things that were necessary. We camped in a pretty place near a creek. I was to wash with Phebe's help. She was only twelve but very energetic. We selected a place quite secluded, close to the creek where we could have plenty of water. Well, we were making the suds foam when a dapper young gentleman from New York, a nephew of our captain, who was on his way to California, discovered us and brought a drink and a large piece of delicious fruit-cake which was made to celebrate the Fourth on the plains. A rather embarrassing position, to accept this compliment in the midst of soiled linen and soapsuds. I had not been introduced to him before. However, I accepted the cake and drink with great patriotism, and from that time he often called at our wagon—that is, our wagon yard. Everyone was supposed to honor all the land that was occupied by ox yokes, camp kettles, and everything that goes to make an outfit for traveling. So when any of the young folks called I

was as much at home sitting on an ox yoke as if I were sitting in an easy chair in a parlor. Such is life on the plains.

"There were several very nice young men in our company, especially *one*. He used to say such *lovely* things to me, told me that I was beautiful and intelligent, and even went so far as to say that I was amiable, something I had never been accused of before, said I was the only woman that he ever loved, and that we were just suited to each other.

"I began to believe him and when he proposed what could I say but yes? Well, the course of true love *did* run smooth, at least until we got into the Valley. And then we had the usual lovers' quarrel but not the usual making up. In a short time, he let me know that another girl appreciated him, if I did not. He married one of the girls of our company, whose ignorance he had ridiculed to me many times while on our journey. Such is the constancy of man! I understood she made him a good wife, but stood in great awe of him, the man had honored her so highly. The fates sometimes seem to interfere with our plans, all for our best good.

"My brother drove an ox team for a widow and her little girl. The little girl was very sweet and amiable, the mother rather peculiar. He said that she would ask more questions in a day than ten men could answer in a week. He was a born joker and could no more help joking than he could help breathing. He could never tell her anything so absurd or ridiculous but what she believed it. He got so tired of her questions, such as 'Riley, I wonder how far we have traveled today?' and 'I wonder how far we will travel tomorrow?' 'I wonder if we will get to water?' 'I wonder if we will see any Indians?' and 'I wonder what they will do?' 'Will they be friendly or savage?' Her wondering got so

monotonous he could hardly stand it.

"At last he had his revenge when we came in sight of Chimney Rock. Anybody who has crossed the plains either by wagon or rail will remember seeing this—a land mark—it is very tall and shaped something like a smokestack and probably centuries old. At the rate we traveled it could be seen several days before we reached it. [When] she began her speculations about the rock, he told her in a most confidential way that as soon as we got to it, he was going to push it down, that he was sick and tired of hearing so much about Chimney Rock, that it had stood there long enough anyway. As soon as he got his hands on it, over it would go. Well, she begged and implored him to let it stand that other emigrants might see it who came after us, but he was obdurate. She then threatened him to tell Brigham, when she got to the Valley. That was always her last resort. Well, he kept her anxiety at fever heat for two days until we were within about a half mile of it. He then gave in to her pleadings and said he would let it stand. She was so delighted that she gave him an extra good dinner and supper that day.

"He little intended his last joke with her to turn out as it did. By the way of amusement, he had been telling her before we came to the last canyon, Emigration, that her wagon was going to tip over, in fact, he *knew* it would. She said that if it did she would tell Brigham. And sure enough it did tip clear over and lifted on the bows. It was a very hard canyon for men to drive down. Riley was awfully surprised. He was only a boy and was terribly frightened. No one worked harder than he to get it righted. With the help of the men in the camp he got it up into the road which was very sideling [steep]. It looked pretty dilapidated with the bows all smashed down,

but did very little damage to the contents and as it was our last day before entering the Valley, he managed very well. Riley never heard whether she told Brigham or not.

"After jogging along several hundred miles the monotony was broken by our cattle stampeding. It seemed the longer we went and the harder the cattle worked, the easier they got frightened. The one that terrified me the most was at night. We had had one or two before so the cattle were prepared for one at any moment. I think it was on account of the Indians, or it might have been the large herds of buffalo that we saw daily, that our company was counseled to corral their animals every night. At night the cattle were turned out to feed, they were watched and herded, then brought into the corral. It was made with wagons formed in a large circle with the wheels touching each other with one opening to drive them in, then log chains put across the opening, so they were perfectly secure.

"We were in buffalo country. We had heard what a terrible thing their stampedes were, that not long before a large herd had started on their mad run and that when those in front came to a high bluff of the Platte River, they dashed in and made a bridge for the last ones who trampled to death and drowned their companions.

"One night about two o'clock the whole camp was peacefully sleeping when all at once there came an awful sound of tramping and bellowing, the ground shook, our wagon trembled and rocked. It flashed through my mind in a moment that a herd of buffalo was stampeding and that we would all be trampled to death. So I covered my head and prepared to die. Mother soon called out to Phebe and myself as there was no sound from our little bedroom (the front end of the wagon). I gave a smothered answer from

under the bed clothes that I was alive.

"All at once there was a change. It was our own cattle broken out of the corral. Something had frightened them and then they started on their wild, mad run. They had run around and around inside and then broken through the log chains. Nothing could stay them. They scattered over the country for miles and miles. It took our men days and days to gather them back again, and a sorry looking lot they were, those that were left, for some died from exhaustion and others were killed. One pair of the captain's cows ran up a very steep hill, fell backwards and broke their necks—one pair less to pull his wagon and one pair less to milk (oh the delicious milk—what a luxury on the plains).

"In that stampede there were two or three men hurt, one quite badly. He was a gold digger going to California who had overtaken us and was traveling with our company a while. The California emigrants traveled much faster than the Mormon emigrants. In trying to stop the cattle he was knocked down and trampled on. His groans were hideous. I did not see him again until one day the next winter, when he called on us. During all the time he was there he was down on his knees. He could stand up but could not sit down. I never heard from him again after he left for the gold mines. Old cattlemen say that tame, domestic horned cattle are the most crazy and wildest of all animals in a stampede. It is very singular, but they seem to start all at once, just as if a bolt had struck every one at the same instant.

"Our next thrilling adventure was one pleasant afternoon as we were slowly jogging along. All at once our whole train was flying in every direction with lightning speed over the plains. I don't think the fastest horses could have kept up with our cows. Father sat in the front of the

wagon talking to and whipping his staid, old oxen to keep them going right along. He was afraid the cows might get mixed up with other teams that were running, or might whirl around and tip the wagon over with us all in it. We went over hump and bump. Sometimes our heads would be thrown up to the top of the wagon bows, there we would alight anywhere it happened inside the wagon. Nobody can appreciate the situation without the experience. Again death was staring me in the

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“Never mind. It’s all right.
It has gone
clear through”

face and again I covered my head. If I had to be killed I didn't want to see the process. Mother soon snatched the covering off my head, and when we came to a stop she gave me a sound lecture to always be on the lookout and watch the best chance for escape.

“Well, after the cattle had run as long as they could they stopped. There were several accidents, and a woman was killed. She was knocked down and trampled to death. She left a family of children. How we all dreaded stampedes—there is something dreadful in a lot of panic-stricken cattle. Even human beings are not responsible when fright overcomes reason.

“One cow in our team was very intelligent. In fact, she was so bright that she used to hide in the willows to keep from being yoked up but when father found her and yoked her she was a good worker and a good milker. She got very lame at one time and could scarcely travel. My parents were very much worried,

having already lost one. They were afraid they could not keep up with the company, and so Mother said she would make a poultice and put it on as soon as the cow laid down for the night. She made a very large one that covered all over the lame hip. Well, the next morning, when father went to get the cows up he called out, ‘Why, Mother, you have poulticed the wrong hip.’ Mother said, ‘Never mind. It’s all right. It has gone clear through.’ And sure enough she [the cow] limped very little that day, and was soon as well as ever. I know there was a great deal of faith mixed up with that poultice.

“Along in the early fall, we used to find wild fruit such as choke cherries, service berries and little red berries called buffalo or squaw berries, all of which we enjoyed very much. One day I decided to have a reception that evening. So after we camped I asked some of the girls and boys to come and spend the evening at our camp fire after their chores were done. Verbal invitations and short notice never gave offense then. All were delighted to come, no regrets.

“In the meantime, I had asked mother to let me make some buffalo berry pies. Of course, she did. Pies were a great luxury and seldom seen on the plains. I wanted to surprise my guests with the sumptuousness of my refreshments. *And I did.* Well, I had hardly gotten the ox yokes and some other things artistically arranged before my company arrived, not so fashionably late as now. After we had chatted a while and sung some songs, I excused myself to go into the pantry (a box under the wagon) and brought out my pies. In passing the pie, I rather apologetically remarked that they might not be *quite sweet* enough. One gallant young man spoke up very quickly, saying, ‘Oh anything would be sweet made by those hands.’ And I believed him.

“After serving the company, I

joined them with my piece of pie. Well, the first mouthful, oh my, it set my teeth on edge, and tasted as if it had been sweetened with citric acid! That ended my pie making on the plains. I often wondered how they could have eaten it, but etiquette demanded it. I don't think there was enough sugar in the camp to have sweetened that pie.

“The best of all meals to me while on our journey was our mid-day luncheon. Mother used to make a kettle of corn meal mush in the morning, then wrapped it up to keep it warm. After the milking was done, the milk was put in a tin churn and wrapped to keep it from slopping over. When we camped at noon to let the cattle feed, Mother used to bring out the mush and milk. Why, it was too good for poor folks! Sister Phebe never liked it. She said it always made her so hungry. I never heard any one complain of a poor appetite while crossing the plains. Any kind of food was sweet *except* my pies. Bread and bacon was more delicious than plum pudding or pound cake now. How environments change our taste!

“The greatest hardship I passed through on our journey was the day before we got to Laramie. The cattle were tired and footsore and the traveling was very hard so Father told us that morning we must all walk. No riding that day. I shall never forget that memorable walk, sand ankle deep to men and women and much deeper to the cattle and wagons. When we camped that night, we had traveled ten miles. I thought it was a thousand and wished many times that day that I was where people didn't get tired.

“At last, we came to the end of our long, tedious journey, and on the evening of October 15 we camped at the mouth of Emigration Canyon. Oh, what a glorious sight to look down into the valley of the Great Salt Lake! The next morning we were up bright and early, and soon drove down.”