

To UTAH -



The DIARY OF TWISS BERMINGHAM, MORMON IMMIGRANT, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES BY SAMUEL TAYLOR MOORE



FOREWORD

ALL but forgotten in the colorful history of the pioneering of our West is the story of the heroic Handcart Settlers.

Substitute the grievous consequences of the economic blight over northern Europe in the middle nineteenth century

barren slopes of the Continental Divide, over rough mountain trails, from the railroad terminus in Iowa City to Zion, now Salt Lake City.

Five handcart trains, numbering roughly four hundred persons each, began the journey in the summer of 1856, averaging over four months on the trail. Starting late, the last two trains did not reach the

mountains until after winter weather had set in. According to a member of the first of these trains, sixty-seven of four hundred pioneers died from starvation, exhaustion, illness and cold. In a single night fifteen froze to death. Of the other train starting late, the same historian reports that one-fourth of the company died. Certain it is that their handcarts had to be abandoned in the deep snows, and the



for the plagues visited on Egypt, and the figure of Brigham Young for that of Moses, and save for the absence of such miracles as the parting of the waters, it might be the story of Exodus in an authentic American setting.

Between two and three thousand Mormon immigrants toiled 1500 miles, pushing and pulling two-wheeled carts laden with all their worldly possessions, the aged and children trudging after, across scorching summer prairie, up the

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story of how a score of men left behind to guard the carts survived until spring is an epic not to be duplicated except in the history of Polar exploration.

But even among the three earlier companies deaths were frequent, and illness, affliction, privation and exhaustion daily experiences. Yet despite such constant hardships the immigrants sang and made merry in their camps at night, sustained by visions of better days ahead. But the stories of later disasters, gaining circulation in the outer world and no doubt exaggerated in the course of repetition, created such apprehension that in succeeding years the handcart pioneers were

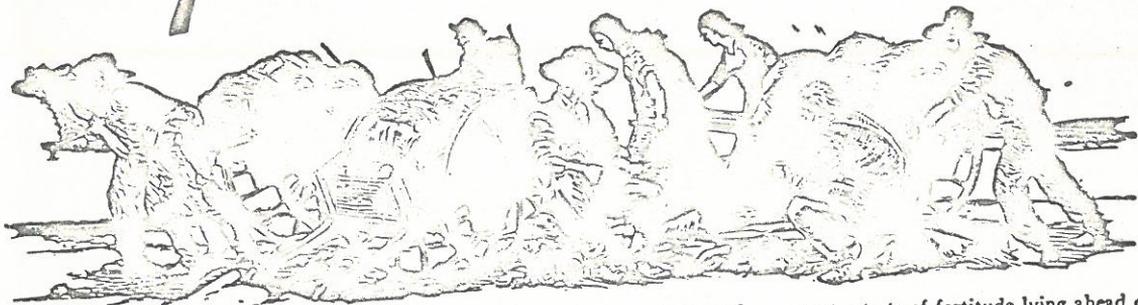
negligible in number. Their hard mode of travel was extinct by 1860.

The handcart idea was born in the active brain of Brigham Young. Succeeding to the presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 1847, he lost no time in stimulating the emigration of European converts. Mormon missionaries had been busy in Europe and as far away as India since 1837, but it is doubtful whether in the thirteen years up to 1850 more than a few thousand foreign converts had joined the shifting capitals of Mormonism, at Kirtland, Ohio; Independence and Far West, Missouri; Nauvoo, Illinois; Salt Lake City. Between 1850 and 1887 Mormon immigrants totaled 85,000.

This great influx was made possible by the creation of a Perpetual Emigration Fund Company whereby for as little as \$50 (\$5 down payment) the convert was transported from Liverpool to Salt Lake City, at least a six months' journey. In the first seven years of the Young program emigrants traveled by sailing ship to New Orleans, thence up the Mississippi by river packet to St. Louis and by ox-team trains to Salt Lake City. In 1855 the railroad was opened as far west as Iowa City, then the capital of Iowa. By combining the use of railroad and handcarts Brigham Young saw an opportunity to re-



By HAND



duce transportation costs to \$45 a person.

Some handcarts were built in St. Louis, some in Chicago, and some by Mormon artisans at Iowa City. Their cost varied from \$20 to less than \$10 each. Lacking uniformity of materials and workmanship, the staunchness of the carts varied. Wooden axles wore out, wheels fell apart. Many broke down beyond repair. Most had to be patched constantly along the trail, using buffalo hide, metal from cooking utensils—whatever human ingenuity could devise. Although quality varied, in appearance the carts were of a pattern, being fitted with twin shafts five feet long with crossbar at the end of the shafts so that they might either be pulled horse-fashion or pushed.

(One of the handcarts is still on exhibition in the Mormon Museum at Salt Lake City.) Each cart weighed about sixty pounds and carried from one hundred pounds of baggage upward. Although normally the weight would dwindle as food supplies were consumed, frequently there was added the extra weight of tired children. Five persons were assigned to each cart, but because of women, children, aged, weak and infirm, in general one able-bodied man or woman was left to draw each vehicle. Assigned to each train went a covered wagon drawn by three yokes of oxen carrying tents and luggage, limited to seventeen pounds per person. A small herd of milk cows completed the traveling organization, but often the cows strayed or went dry.

In general, the emigrants were from the poorer classes of England and North Europe, predominantly from the British Isles, where life for industrial workers, miners, farmers and artisans was a grinding struggle for the most meager existence.

Yet, allowing for a primary material goal, the faith of these converts was evidenced everywhere. That they possessed the courage to embark on a long and unknown journey to the wilderness is sufficient testimony to their initiative, intelligence,

greater tests of fortitude lying ahead on the Handcart Trail.

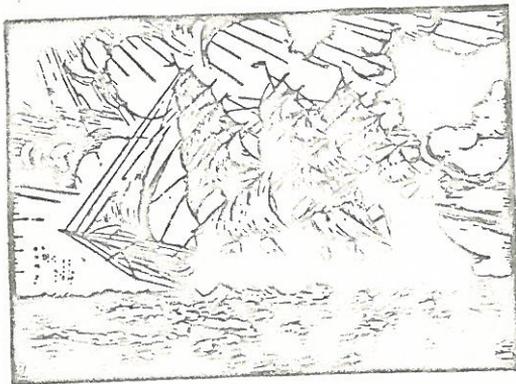
THE DIARY

12TH APRIL 1856: Left Dublin bound for Zion. Kate and children all sick on the passage to Liverpool. After ranging the streets for some time, found Brother Chapman who gave us lodgings and brought our luggage to his house for which we had to pay 5/6. Went to meeting in the morning to the Center Branch. Heard Brother Wheelock and others speak. Went in the evening again and heard Brother Capt. Dan Jones and Brother Wheelock and others. Brother Jones addressed the Saints in English and Welsh, members from both countries being present.

13TH APRIL: Passed a very unpleasant night in Chapman's, having been bit by Bugs all night and found both my eyes fearfully swelled in the morning. Went to the office, 36 Islington, but could not easily settle my passage in consequence of their being very busy. Moved from Chapman's to a fresh lodging.

14TH APRIL: Settled my passage at the office, and bought some things for my journey.

15TH APRIL: Walked through the most



ambition and hardihood, even though most were unlettered.

In training, education and background, Twiss Birmingham was far above the average Mormon convert. A graduate of the University of Dublin, a Protestant, he had served as private secretary to a British official. Unattracted by the dull routine of government service, ambitious for his growing family, he staked his limited capital on this venture in the New World, at the age of twenty-four. The original of his diary, which is here published for the first time, is now in the possession of Rutledge Birmingham Barry of New York City, his grandson.

Although that part of the diary illuminating the trials of the handcart trek is of major historical importance, the early entries so graphically reveal the hardships of a trans-Atlantic voyage before the advent of steamships that the record begins with the departure from Dublin. Indeed, the hardships of the sea trip constituted excellent training for the



part of Liverpool and saw the principal buildings, St. George's Hall and others.

17TH APRIL: Left the lodgings and went on board the *S. Curling*, in the Wellington Dock.

18TH APRIL: Ship still in dock taking in cargo and passengers' luggage.

19TH APRIL: The ship was towed out of dock into the Mersey and cast anchor

Ward. John Lewis 10th Ward. John Walters 11th Ward. Brother Wilson to be 2nd or assisting Clerk.

The resolutions passed were, that the President of each ward have a sufficient number of men up every morning to wash and clean under and before each berth in his ward, and to have it finished and prayers over at 6 o'clock. Any neglect of the rules passed by the council or presiding, the President of the ward will be held responsible and will be liable to be tried by a council of his brethren.

The cook house to be open to receive the 1st and 2d wards at 6 o'clock for cooking breakfast. 3d and 5th ward to cook from 6½ to 7, 4th and 6th 7 to 7½, 7th and 8th 7½ to 8, 9th and 10 and 11th 8 to 9.

Dinner to follow the same rotation, commencing at 11 o'clock and ending at 3. Supper or Tea, same rotation commencing at 4½ and ending at 7½, when the galley fires are to be put out.

Prayers are to be over in each ward at 8 o'clock P. M., and the President of each ward to have a teachers' meeting within this time, say to commence at ¼ 8.

In order to prevent disease, the Presidents are to have the Saints go on deck as much as possible.

There were many other resolutions passed with regard to the regulation of the Saints in the different wards, one of which was that the Hospital be allotted to Brother Jones and the Clerks for an Office, and that we keep all sickness out of the ship.

20TH APRIL—SUNDAY: Still a calm. Off the Welsh coast. A general assembly on deck. President Jones addressed the meeting and his counsellors also spoke.

21ST APRIL: Still a calm. In Carnarvon Bay, off the Welsh Coast.

22ND APRIL: During the night we had a nice breeze, which left us on the Wexford coast, Ireland, where we are perfectly becalmed.

23D APRIL: Wind a little fresher this morning. Running at 5 miles an hour. Called for night watch and appointed sergeant of the watch. During my watch I found one of the sentries asleep. Relieved by Brother Payne at one o'clock.

24TH APRIL: A good and favorable wind. Ship making 12 miles an hour. Kate and children sick. Self sick, and all on board unless the crew and Captain Jones.

25TH APRIL: Wind still favorable. Ship running 15 miles. Passengers still all sick. Between decks in a horrid mess, and ship rolling perpetually. Paid the Captain's cook £1 to cook for me during the voyage, it being almost impossible to get anything cooked at the passengers' galley fire, from the number of passengers and the smallness of the cooking stoves.

Appointed by the President *Star* and book agent for the passage, he having bought a few numbers of the *Star* from Liverpool in advance and some books.

NOTE: This was the celebrated

Mormon newspaper "Millennial Star."

26TH APRIL: Favorable wind all day. Nearly all the Saints on deck. Paid Brother Jones for the *Stars* and books sold and returned those unsold, received fifty *Stars* more to sell. Week's provisions given out. 9 o'clock P. M., all well on board.

27TH APRIL—SUNDAY: A small bird, a swallow or martin, flew on deck and fell down panting, caught by the carpenter of the ship, who gave it to the Captain. The Captain said it flew from land which was 700 or 800 miles from Cape Clear. Favorable wind and ship running well. Addressed the Saints at the evening meeting, being called on by the President. A general meeting held today on deck. Volunteered to assist to wash and clean the ward in the morning.

28TH APRIL: Passed a very sleepless night. Water coming down on my berth all night. A child died, 17 months old, this morning, and was thrown overboard at 8 o'clock P. M. Head wind. Ship running about 6 miles an hour.

29TH APRIL: Very stormy. Another child died this morning.

30TH APRIL: Blowing a gale. Very many of the passengers sick again, owing to the roughness of the sea. Two births, a boy and a girl, which leaves the number of passengers the same as when we started.

1ST MAY: Getting passengers to sign



until 12 o'clock. Tug-boat came alongside and brought Brother Franklin D. Richards and others of the Valley Elders amongst whom were Brothers Scott and McGhee, bringing Sister Brannigan who went to Belfast a week previous to avoid being taken by her parents who wished to prevent her going with the Saints.

All hands had to come on deck to pass the Doctor and the Govt. Inspector. After passing and going below, I was sent for by Brother Franklin, who gave me his parting blessing and expressed a wish to serve me when he came to Zion. Remained at anchor in the river until next morning when the Captain of the Ship and Brother Capt. Dan Jones, the President of the Ship, came on board. We passed the doctor again in the general muster on deck. The tug towed the ship out to sea and left about 2 o'clock P. M., carrying back letters for post. Wrote to my uncle and Tom, and received a letter from my uncle and one from Brother Bond. Very little wind. Ship running about 2 miles an hour. Held an organization council on deck, but afterwards went below to the hospital.

President Jones presiding, the following rules and regulations were adopted: 1st Presiding:

Elder Dan Jones—President; Elder John Oakly—Counsellor, Elder David Grant—Counsellor.

The ship was then divided into 11 wards, and I was elected 1st Clerk of the ship. Elder Thos. Thomas to preside over the 1st Ward. John Edwards 2d Ward. John Parry 3d Ward. Job Welling 4th Ward. John McDonald 5th Ward. James Thomas 6th Ward. Evans Evans 7th Ward. Richard Williams 8th Ward. William Butler 9th



the Bonds, required by the Permanent Emigration Fund Co.

2D MAY: Getting passengers to sign bonds but obliged to leave off in consequence of the roughness of the sea. Sister Laurenson fainted but recovered immediately on being administered to. Sea and storm rose so high that the boxes which were lashed broke from their fastenings and ran all over the ship. A boy fell down one of the hatches and was much hurt.

3D MAY: A fearful storm last night. Two sails carried away. The Captain of the ship said he never witnessed such a storm, although he was 20 years at sea. Slept none all night. Obligated to hold the children, one under each arm, to prevent



their being thrown out of bed. 12 O'CLOCK: Storm still raging, and a great many people sick from the pitching and rolling of the vessel. A general prayer meeting at the middle hatch for calmer weather and a more prosperous voyage.

4TH MAY—SUNDAY: Passed a good night. Slept well. Vessel making very little progress. Wind dead ahead. A sacrament meeting between decks and another meeting at 7½ in the evening.

5TH MAY: Called last night, just as I was going to bed, to be captain of the watch for the night. Went on guard at one o'clock. Came off at 6. Nothing particular transpired during the night.

6TH MAY: Head winds and stormy. Many very sea sick.

7TH MAY: Head winds. Vessel rocking very much.

8TH MAY: A child died this morning.

9TH MAY: Stormy for the whole day. Another child died this morning. A "gentile" passenger made a great deal of noise and was dragged from the young females' part of the ship where he secreted himself and put into his own berth. Brother Lucas and myself placed as a guard upon the single women's quarters for the balance of the voyage to prevent any such recurrence.

NOTE: It is of record that the Curling made port at Boston. That there are no further entries in the diary until the start of the handcart trek possibly is due to the press of duties which would fall to the lot of a clerk—Mormon records, the execution of immigration papers, etc. It is probable that entries are lacking for the train journey to Iowa City because immigrants were herded

like cattle into cramped quarters and frequent changes of cars were necessary. There is also evidence that the camp at Iowa City was not up to the usual Mormon standards in organization and discipline, which is understandable by reason of the fact that the handcart trains represented a new experiment.

IOWA CITY, IOWA, 11TH JUNE: Left town with the hand carts. Travelled 8 miles. Camped at 9 mile house.

12TH JUNE: Travelled 12 miles. Started at 9½ o'clock and camped at 1 o'clock. Very hot day and windy. The dust flew so thick that we could not see each other 1 yard distant. Before we left, I was appointed President of a tent. This day was so very severe that Brother Laurenson and myself with our families thought we could not go on with safety to ourselves and families and drag hand carts with about 250 lbs. of luggage on them and so determined on returning to Iowa City to try to procure a team to go through with.

13TH JUNE: Left the camp and paid 5 dollars to a teamster to take us back. Arrived at Iowa City at 8 o'clock. Found it very difficult to procure lodging. Saw Brother Ferguson at the camp who encouraged me to follow the company.

14TH JUNE: Overtook the company at Little Bear Creek, 36 miles from Iowa City.

16TH JUNE: Started at 7 o'clock A. M. Camped at ¼ 7 o'clock. Travelled 15 miles. Day very hot. Bro. Laurenson fainted under his cart.

17TH JUNE: Started at 7½ o'clock. Camped at 3 o'clock. Travelled 15 miles.

18TH JUNE: Started at 6 o'clock.

Camped at 10 o'clock. Travelled 10 miles.

19TH JUNE: Started at 7 o'clock. Camped at 2 o'clock at Elk Creek. Travelled 12 miles.

20TH JUNE: Left the camp at 7 o'clock. Camped at 4½ at Indian Creek, 14 miles.

21ST JUNE: Started at 7½. Camped at South Skunk Creek. Travelled 14 miles. A child died this morning and was buried under a tree.

22D JUNE—SUNDAY: Remained at South Skunk Creek.

23D JUNE: Started at 7¼. Camped at 10 o'clock, at the 4 mile Creek. 10 miles.

24TH JUNE: Started at 7½. Camped at 4 o'clock. 13 miles.

25TH JUNE: Started at 7¼, camped on the North Coon River at 4½. 19 miles. A German Sister fainted on the road today.

26TH JUNE: Started at 7¼ o'clock. Camped at 2½ at the Middle Coon River. 12 miles.

27TH JUNE: Started at 7¼. Camped at South Coon River. 9 miles.

28TH JUNE: Started at 6½ o'clock. Camped at Middle Coon River at 3½. 16 miles. Sister Laurenson fainted on the road today.

29TH—SUNDAY: Remained in Camp.

30TH JUNE: Started at 6¼ o'clock. Camped at Turkey Grove. 10½ miles. This day Brother Arthur stopped at a Town, himself and his family as he could not draw his handcart any further.

1ST JULY: Started at ½ 8. Camped at the head of Turkey Creek. 14 miles. Very tired. A boy, 8 years old, lost on the road, son of Brother Parker. Storm, thunder and lightning raged fearfully all night. Blew up part of our tent and wet all our clothes through. Lay all night in our wet clothes until morning with the water running under us in streams.

2ND JULY: Three of the Brethren started in search of the boy. Just returned but found no trace of him. Remained all day encamped. Went on the cattle guard at 10 o'clock.

3D JULY: Started at 5 o'clock and camped at 7¼, after a long and tedious journey of 25 miles. Some of the Brethren fainted on the road and were carried into camp in the ox-team. I nearly fainted myself from exhaustion, but plucked up courage and never let go the handcart. Several of the Sisters and children belonging to Captain Elsworth's company, having gone astray, there were some of the

Brethren sent out in search of them. Returned into camp at 4 o'clock in the morning with all those who were lost.

4TH JULY: Started at 6 o'clock and travelled 22 miles. Camped on Silver Creek. One of the brethren fainted



under his handcart today. One of the brethren shot a tame Elk for which he had to pay 50 dollars—rather an expensive shot.

5TH JULY: Remained all day in camp.

6TH JULY—SUNDAY: All day in camp. Brother Parker returned to the camp this morning having found his boy, whom he brought with him. The boy slept all night under a tree in the forest and felt not the dreadful thunderstorm which raged on that night. The next morning he made his way to a farmer's house, some 9 miles distant. The farmer took care of him until his father found him. Attended meeting today and heard several of the Elders speak.

7TH JULY: Left Silver Creek at 11 1/2, and had a very fatiguing journey of 20 miles. After 10 miles, 2 families gave out, being frightened at getting nothing for 3 days but Indian corn strabour. They stopped at a farm house to work for 2 dollars per day and food. I feel really sore in my inside from eating nothing else for the above time, without anything with it, either milk or anything else.

8TH JULY: Started from Cruskato Creek at 6 1/2 o'clock and travelled 20 miles. Camped at the Mormon camp at Florence City at 7 1/2 o'clock. The company generally very fatigued. Found some of Brother Elsworth's company lying insensible on the road. This day we travelled through a beautiful country and passed Council Bluffs, which put me in mind of the mountains of Killarney, Ireland. We saw the place where a great number of the Saints were driven from in 1848, and the little graveyard with many of the crude tombstones, on which one could scarcely read the names of some of our brethren who had fallen, perhaps by the hand of some ruffians. The homes in which they had lived were nearly all dilapidated and the tabernacle was a perfect ruin. When it was in good order it must have accommodated nearly 1000 people. At about 5 o'clock we reached the River Missouri, over which we were ferried by a small steamer.

NOTE: This camp originally was founded as the winter camp of the Mormons after the Saints were driven from Nauvoo. Until the transcontinental railroad was pushed beyond, it served as the final forwarding station west of the Missouri River.

9TH JULY: Camp all well. Several of the Brethren gone to work during the time they remain here.

10TH JULY: Went to work myself to dig a well, but was only employed for one day for which I got \$2. I was not sorry that the job was finished as my hands were in one flake of blisters, I had to work so hard. I found it somewhat worse than drawing the handcart.

11TH JULY: Went to Omaha to get a glass in my watch and went afterwards about 2 miles further on to see Sister Brannigan who was sewing at a farmer's house for \$3 per week and her board.

On way I met with a camp of Indians, the Omahas. Went into their camp but they speak but very little English. They were very friendly. There were about 60 of them. The men are fine looking fellows but the women and children were very plain looking and dirty and perfectly naked.

Brother Brower who was with me gave them some money.

12TH JULY: Went on camp guard from 9 o'clock P. M. till 12 1/2.

13TH JULY: Went again to Omaha to get another glass in my watch, having broke the last one, paid 50 cents for glasses each time.

14TH JULY: Went to Bluffs City—10 miles—to try and sell my watch that I might buy a cow but did not succeed.

15TH JULY: The Sisters Lucas left the camp for good and went to Bluffs City to service, being determined not to go any further with the handcarts.

15TH JULY: Brother Lucas took a lot of ground in the City to build a house on, and got a farm of 350 acres of land 10 miles out on the prairie. He got all for nothing, simply for settling down on it. I was offered the same and a school with a yearly stipend if I would stop and take charge of it but of course I knew better than that. This day a German sister died of fever, 6 days' sickness.

16TH JULY: Brother Reid shot in the leg by a "Gentile."

17TH JULY: Brother Elsworth's company went out.

18TH JULY: The Welsh company is coming in tomorrow.

20TH JULY: The Welsh company came in today, 300 in number. Fifty stopped on the road.

21ST JULY: Some of Brother Elsworth's company came back and said they would not go any farther.

22D JULY: Spoke to Brother Lucas and tried to get him to come on but no use. He said he would not go any farther, this year.

23D JULY: Six of us carried in 800 bags of flour into the store. Hard work rather.

24TH JULY: Left Florence. Travelled 7 miles.

25TH JULY: Travelled 20 miles, to Elk-horn River, where we found a camp of Indians, many of whom came to meet us and were very friendly. The chief took my cart and drew it into camp about 1/4 mile and although a tall strong looking man, it made the perspiration run down his face until it dropped on the ground. Many of the Indians got drunk in the night and commenced fighting among themselves, but not knowing what they were at we were all called out of our beds and ordered to load our guns. After watching for some time, all became quiet and we returned again to the arms of Morpheus. In the morning we heard that one of the Indians had been shot in the arm by one of his fellows, which we

soon verified, their sending over to our camp to know if we had a doctor amongst us. Brother Eatkin went and dressed it.

26TH JULY: Crossed Flkhorn River by means of a very roughly constructed ferry. For the conveyance of us over, the company had to pay \$6. Travelled 15 miles without any water until we came to the Platte River, where the water was a joyful sight to many, being 6 or 7 hours under the burning sun without a drop to cool our tongues.

* 27TH JULY: Camped all day on the north bend of the Platte. Took a dose of castor oil which sickened me very much and kept me cantering for a long time.

28TH JULY: Rather weak this morning and terribly annoyed by two boils, one on my jaw about as big as pigeon egg and another on the calf of my leg which torments me very much when drawing the hand cart.

* 29TH JULY: Boils very sore this morning but must draw on the cart still. With such sores at home I would lie upon two chairs and never stir until they were healed. Started early this morning and travelled 20 miles.

† 30TH JULY: Started early this morning and travelled 12 miles to Loup-fork ferry, over which we had to ferry the cars and wagons and women and children. It was really funny to see some 50 of the Brethren hauling a large ferry boat over this ferry and when they would come to a deep place in the stream, all make a rush to get on to the boat, some succeeding, some tumbling in and others obliged to swim for it. It took 3 1/2 hours to ferry all over. Camped on the other side.

31ST JULY: Left Loup-fork and travelled 20 miles without water. I was so exhausted with my sores and the labour of pulling that I was obliged to lie down for a few hours after arriving in camp before I could do anything. Kate was also so tired and fatigued out that she was glad to get lying down without any supper and I was not able to cook any for ourselves so we were obliged to do with a bit of bread and a pint of milk. This is the quantity of milk we have been allowed morning and evening since we left Florence. Sometimes it is less. Rather little for 5 persons.

While travelling this day, often was I near falling on the road for want of water, and with fatigue. Many did fall right down and some had to put into the wagons but many were obliged to wait until they recovered a little and foot it again. 8 o'clock when we got into camp.

1ST AUGUST: 23 miles over a bad road. No water, only what we carried. Sister Hardy from Scotland fainted on the road today.

2D AUGUST: Started early this morning and travelled 28 miles over a very bad road, having to pull the carts through heavy sand, sometimes for miles. We

were obliged to carry water with us today. Camped on the open prairie without either wood or water and consequently had to go to bed supperless.

3D AUGUST—SUNDAY: Started at 5 o'clock without any breakfast and had to pull the carts through 6 miles of heavy sand. Some places the wheels were up to the boxes and I was so weak from thirst and hunger and being exhausted with the pain of the boils that I was obliged to lie down several times, and many others had to do the same. Some fell down. I was very much grieved today, so much so that I thought my heart would burst—sick—and poor Kate—at the same time—crawling on her hands and knees, and the children crying with hunger and fatigue. I was obliged to take the children and put them on the hand cart and urge them along the road in order to make them keep up. About 12 o'clock a thunder storm came on, and the rain fell in torrents. In our tent we were standing up to our knees in water and every stitch we had was the same as if we were dragged through the river. Rain continued until 8 o'clock the following morning.

NOTE: There are no entries from August 4th to 12th inclusive.

13TH AUGUST: Started out at 10 o'clock and Kate was obliged to travel all day without a shift and nothing on but a shawl and petticoat and those half wet. Had to travel over a great many sand hills and camped on the wet ground in a wet blanket as well as to go to bed supperless. No wood to make a fire and very bad water. Went on the camp guard from 12 o'clock till 4.

14TH AUGUST: Started at 5½ o'clock without any breakfast. Travelled 8 miles and halted at the River Platte. Got breakfast and dried all our wet clothes and then travelled 14 miles more. A few days previous to this we met a man coming from California. He was deserted on the plains by his companions, who left him with nothing but a shirt and trousers which he had on. He was making his way as fast as he could to Council Bluffs. He was then 200 miles from it. We gave him some bread.

15TH AUGUST: Travelled 17 miles—5 miles sand.

16TH AUGUST: Started this morning before breakfast at 4½ o'clock. Stopped at 8 o'clock for breakfast. This morning an old woman belonging to our company was bitten by a rattlesnake in the leg and before half an hour her leg swelled to four times its thickness. She was administered to by the Elders and we started again, but unfortunately as we were starting another old woman was run over by one of the wagons. The front wheel went over her thighs and the back wheels over her shins, and singular to say, although the wagon was laden with 32 cwt. of flour, not one of her bones was broken. This day we had the most

severe day's journey we had since we started and travelled over 20 miles of heavy sand hills or bluffs. Besides having to ford many streams. All seemed to be fully worn out when they got into camp.

17TH AUGUST—SUNDAY: In camp all day. Spent the day mending my boots, and Kate was washing. This day, a German Sister died.

18TH AUGUST: Buried the girl and started out of camp at 5½ o'clock. Travelled 20 miles. 10 miles of sand today and had to ford 6 streams.

19TH—20TH—21ST—22D—23D—AUGUST: These five days we travelled at the rate of about 22 miles per day. Some days starting as early as 5 o'clock and never after 7. Most of those days we had heavy sandy roads. Sometimes for ten miles at a time.

AUGUST 24TH—SUNDAY: Camped all day at Chimney Rock. Spent the day mending my clothes and baking and cooking while Kate was washing and mending the children's clothes. On the 22d while we were on the road travelling, we were overtaken by a very heavy thunderstorm which wet us all to the skin, but as soon as it was over we went at it again and made a journey of 7 or 8 miles before we camped and then we had to lie on the wet grass all night, and go to bed supperless, there being no firewood to cook, the Buffalo chips being all wet. We had to ford 20 streams this week.

25TH—26TH—27TH AUGUST: Very heavy travelling through sand all the time at about 19 miles per day.

28TH AUGUST: After travelling 12 miles through sand, came to Fort Laramie where after crossing the river and getting some wet trousers and petticoats we remained all night. Passed many camps of Indians, all peaceable.

29TH—30TH AUGUST: These two days we travelled 50 miles. The 30th we crossed the Platte again to the north side. Remained in camp all day.

31ST AUGUST: Travelled 29 miles and crossed the Platte over to the south side.

1ST—2D—3D SEPTEMBER: Travelled at about 25 miles a day. On the 2d lost a German boy.

4TH SEPT.: Crossed Muddy Creek and travelled 20 miles and late in the evening forded the Platte again for the last time. For five days we were not in camp for an hour after night and we were always up at daybreak preparing to start at 5. We met the wagons at Deer Creek which were sent with flour from the Valley to meet us. There were 5 wagons, one for each Company and each wagon had 1000 lbs. of flour in them. Two started for the Valley with our Company. German boy's father died.

SEPT. 5TH: Very wet today. Could not start it rained so much. Snow four feet deep on the mountains all around us.

SEPT. 21ST: From the 5th to the 21st, nothing particular occurred save the

meeting of some wagons of flour from the valley for which we will have to pay at the rate of 18c per lb. when we get to the city.

Passed Independence Rock. Crossed Green River which we had to ford with many smaller ones. Met some other wagons and people coming to meet their friends in the Company. Travelled at the rate of about 25 miles per day. Two days we travelled 32 miles each. Camped last night at Fort Bridger where we remained until 10 o'clock today. We are now 113 miles from the city. Henry Bounding fell down and fainted yesterday under the hand cart from fatigue. Had to be carried into camp which we did not reach until 10 o'clock at night.

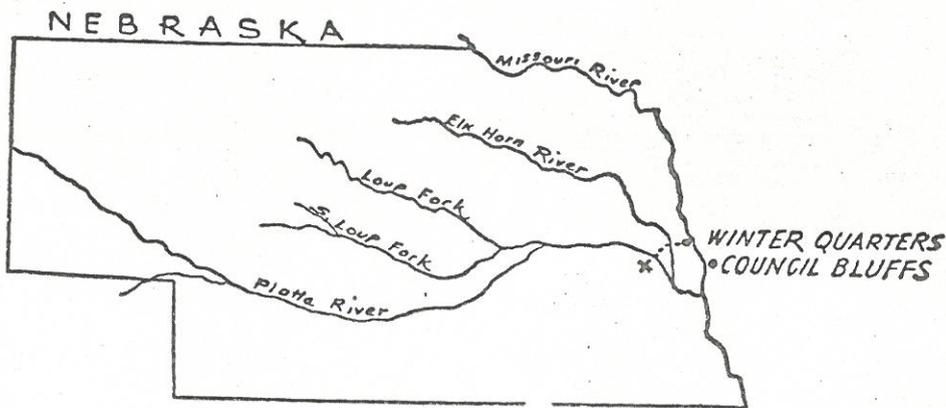
Thus the diary. Salt Lake City was a disappointment to Twiss Bermingham and his family. The following year he apostacized and returned to Florence, Nebraska, where he welcomed the post as school teacher which the previous summer he "of course knew better" than to take. In seven years' residence at Florence one of the three children who had made the long, hard journey died of scarlet fever. But five other children subsequently were born to the Berminghams, seven living to maturity. Four are still alive at this writing.

From Florence the growing family moved to Boston and later to New York City, where it prospered far above the average. For many years before his death at the turn of the century Twiss Bermingham held the title of Tax Commissioner of New York City.

Four of his grandsons wore the United States uniform in the World War. One of them, Rutledge B. Barry, who supplied the diary, was a first lieutenant in the 93d Aero Squadron of the Third Pursuit Group and is a former vice-commander of Westport (Connecticut) Post of The American Legion.



CAPTAIN DAN JONES

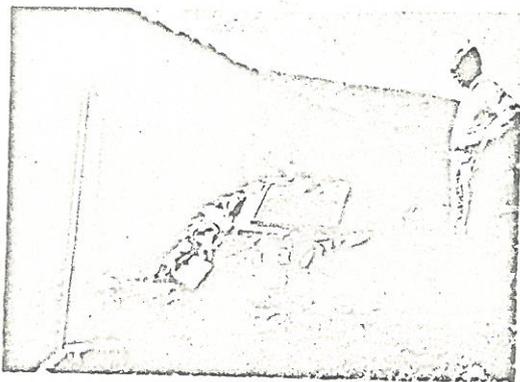


Daniel Spencer acted as General Superintendent of Immigration on the borders, assisted by George T. Grant, William H. Kimball, James H. Hart and others.

Five hand cart companies crossed the plains in 1856. Most of them had sailed from Liverpool, England, that same year. The sickness, the inconvenience, over-crowded conditions and very poor accommodations on the sailing ships at that time perhaps schooled them for the trials and suffering awaiting them before they reached their "Zion".

The First Handcart Company under Capt. Edmund Ellsworth left Iowa City, Iowa, the 9th of June 1856. A. Galoway, clerk. The Second, under Capt. Daniel D. McArthur, left Iowa City, the 11th of June 1856. Twiss Bermingham, clerk. The Third, under Capt. Edward Bunker, left the 23rd of June 1856. The Fourth under Capt. James G. Willie, left Iowa City, 15th of July 1856. The Fifth was under Capt. Edward Martin. This

was the last company to leave Iowa City, Iowa, in 1856. When the company passed Florence, Nebraska, August the 25, 1856, it consisted of 576 persons, 146 handcarts, 7 wagons, etc. (Church Chronology, page 57 - 1856)



GRAVES OF HANDCART PIONEERS AT ROCK CREEK HOLLOW, WYOMING

Captains of the Five Handcart Companies that crossed the Plains in 1856

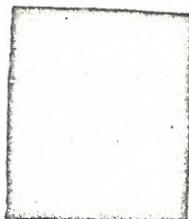
Edmund Ellsworth

Daniel D. McArthur

Edward Bunker

James G. Willie

Edward Martin





President Brigham Young
1856

In whose fertile brain the Hand Cart
idea was conceived.

President Franklin D. Richards and associate Elders, who launched
the Hand Cart project and followed it through to the Valley of Salt
Lake. - - 1856



Edmund Ellsworth, Joseph A. Young, William Kimball, George Grant, James Ferguson, James A. Little, Philomeno Lee,
Edward Butler, Charles Webb, Franklin D. Richards, Daniel Stewart, Don Jones, Edward Martin,
James Bond, Steve Conditall, W. C. Doobar, J. D. Ross, Daniel D. McArthur.