

## Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 1847–1868

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### Source of Trail Excerpt:

Jones, Albert, Address, 4 Oct. 1906, in Handcart Veterans Association, Scrapbook, 1906-1914.

### Read Trail Excerpt:

Address read by Albert Jones of Provo to the Hand Cart Veterans assembled  
in the Assembly Hall Temple Block Salt Lake City  
on the Evening of October 4<sup>th</sup> 1906.

Brethren, Sisters, and Friends of the remnant of those who crossed the great plains with Hand Carts.—

I was one of them,—but as a boy of fifteen, my trials were light in comparison to those of mature years,—fathers and mothers of families—the storry of your privations is well known, and has been told at your hearthstones many a time, with no intent to harrow up the feelings of your children and friends—but to show up more vividly the comforts that you now enjoy—and have for the many years past—it is not in the nature of the true Saint, to repine at trials past; as the verse correctly renders this point which reads:

"How will the Saints rejoice to tell,  
And count their sufferings o'er,  
When they upon Mount Zion dwell  
And view the landscape o'er."

I remember that my Brother S.S. and myself led out at the head of the column of Hand Carts from Iowa Camp Ground, and it was with a certain amount of pride that I rejoiced in my youthful strength—as I grasped the handle bar of the cart—and bore it forth so easy with the keep of my brother.

I was short in stature then for my age, and broadly built—was strong—not sick one day through the long journey—no frost or frost bite on my young body in spite of the bitter cold weather endured by our company—the Martin & Tyler which arrived in Salt Lake City, November 30, 1856.

Our traveling companion now deceased, Francis W Webster of Ceader [Cedar] City—after an interval of thirty years met me at the home of a friend in this beautiful city, & made the remark—  
"had I been looking for you—should have expected to have met a short stocky built man.

You know my friends how we suffered better than I—through your personal expirience—I was the youngest one of a family of five—and we all came through alive—without scar and blanch [blemish]. My dear old mother [Sarah] then fifty-five (55) years of age stood the perils and the hardships of the journey and lived in Provo eleven years after her arrival—many many others

that lived through the ordeal have gone to the great beyond, John Watkins our bugler who called us to prayer, & our old time friend Wm. L. Binder, a man of unbounded charity and a lovable disposition.

The latter carried me across the Sweetwater when it was freezing terribly hard; and my brother S.S. pulled our Cart through the cold stream when our handcart broke down, upon it coming out of the water on the other bank—and my brother went on to camp in his wet clothes, while I stayed behind, and after a long time succeeded in bringing our bedding & other things into camp on another handcart.

John Jacques, one of our company has gone; but his name is immortalized in his grand poem, sung by the Saints these many years, "O say what is truth," this poem I might say adorns yes adorns the last page of one of our acknowledged scriptures, of these the latter days, known as the 'Pearl of Great price.'

You are of Iseral [Israel], & though you gathered to Zion in the humble manner you did—you are of the best blood the earth affords—what greater claim exists to superiority of birth—that you have not; when the Patriarch with hands upon your heads, has with the vision of the seer declared you of the Ephriamic stock.

Rejoice ye Saints of God in the grand promises made you—since you laid down the shafts of that rickety old cart you have been blessed—many of you have been laboring unceasingly since then—you have spent years on missions—you have in turn gathered your fellow-religionists home to Zion,—have fought the Indians who sought your lives,—endured persecution for the Gospels sake—have been in peril both by sea & by land. Imprisoned & fined for conscience sake—all this and more have you passed through, scince your entry to these grand vallies to which God in His mercy has led you.

I well remember the scene of then, Joseph A. Young & companion reached us, as the first noble band of rescuers from the vallies—Jos. A. rode a white mule down a snow covered hill or a dugway into our camp the white mule was lost sight of, on the white background of snow—and Jos. A. with his big blue soldiers overcoat, its large cape & capacious skirts rising & falling with the motion of the mule, gave the appearance of a big blue winged angel flying to our rescue.

The scene that presented itself on his arrival, I shall never forget; women crying aloud; on their knees, holding to the skirts of his overcoat as though afraid he would escape from their grasp & fly away—Joseph stood in their midst drawn up to his full height and gazed upon their upturned faces; his eyes full of tears; I boy as I was prayed "God bless him."

His coming gave us a pound of flour that night instead of the four ounces we had issued us for several days past—I have the little print sack my mother made me in which I received my ration of flour & shall hold it as a sacred momento of those days: the next morning after Josephs arrival we left the camp, where we had been about four days, & had buried about fourteen of our number.

As we neared the vallies—younger men—boys in their red shirts, their trousers thrust well down

into their boot tops made their appearance felling the dry timber for our fires—& even trying to make merriment to cheer up our gloomy & sorely tried people

I think it must have been Coopers tale "The Prairie" which I read in London, that gave me so great an admiration for the "American axe," and these red shirted young giants received from me the greatest admiration for their skill in cutting down the trees, with their quick & rapid blows—& I thought my fortune would be made if I could only swing the axe so gracefully & effectually as these youths from the vallies.

I followed them from fire to fire & if allowed to cut a stick into two with their axe I was in my glory—although they laughed at my first attempts to acquire its use—one night I well remember after I had sung sever[a]l songs to the boys around their jolly big campfire—I moved to the other side of the fire—from where they were sitting—& in my admiration of these active young fellows, I made a vow—That should I and my people reach the vallies in safety—and a call should come to go out to rescue belated Saints in their incoming through the mountains, I would go out to help them—in six years the call came: Bishop Duke of Provo in the year 1862 called me to take my own dear self—my one yoke of Oxen—and my own wagon and go 1000 miles to Florence to bring in a wagonload of such emigrants.

I went under the late Cap. Homer Duncan making the round trip in the shortest time of any of the ox trains dispatched from the Vallies in that business—fulfilled the vow I had made—& this effort is among the most pleasant of my life.

In all the labors of your frontier life you have nobly taken your post of duty—& this day you feel in your hearts that the toils and labors of the past are amply rewarded in the blessings of today—in your grasp of the principles of the gospel, the material blessings of this life, which through a life of constant labor you have realized—today you travel to & fro perchance in your own carriage or upon the cars:—our hearts are lifted up in praise to God for all his blessings we now enjoy—& though the handcart episode is one of the unpleasant expiresses of our lives, the schooling that it gave, & the training of our unpleasant episodes in our lives since then—all have tended to make our faith in our religion the stronger—& our appreaciation of Gods own hand dealing to us as a people, more easily discerned.

May Gods blessings be upon you aged people & may your children ever be true to the cause for which you have spent your lives.