

Autobiography of Barnard White

In the month of June 1856 my mother, sisters Elizabeth and Eliza, and brother Richard arrived at Boston, whither I went to meet them with Eliza's husband Edmund Brooks. We went out to meet them in a small sailing boat, and we had a happy meeting on the ship. We left the ship later in the evening and a storm blew up and had not Brooks been a sailor, we should have been drowned.

My mother, brother Richard and sisters Elizabeth and Eliza left England the 22nd of May on the ship Horizon commanded by Captain Reed with 856 saints on board under the presidency of Elders Edward Martin, Jessie Haven, and George F. Vaugh. The emigrants were 635 Perpetual Emigration Fund emigrants 221 ordinary, including seven cabin passengers. Among the number were Samuel Purcell and family who had given the first sixpence to the Mormon Elders when they first went to England in 1837.

We took the cars for Iowa City, crossing the Hudson at Albany and passing through Buffalo on the 4th of July. We traveled by train 1500 miles from Boston to Iowa City, which was a very tiresome Journey. We were put in cars that had no seats, and we had to sit on our trunks and baggage with no room to lie down at night. We arrived in Iowa City on the 8th of July 1856.

We finally got ready but had orders not to start and lay on the camp ground until September 5 when, we bid adieus to the camp and started on our Journey to Zion.

On the road to Council Bluffs we were told that we were too late and would perish on the road, but the Elders told us it would be all right and we would get to the valley. Our train numbered about forty wagons led by Captain John A. Hunt.

In a few days we caught up to the Martin Handcart Company and many of them were getting quite worn out. The weather was fair and we got along quite well until we were well up the Platte River. Then the weather turned cold and stormy, and the handcart company was on one half rations. We were about 400 miles from Salt Lake City. The poor souls were giving out every day and laying their bodies down by the wayside.

Their suffering was intense that night, and the next morning there were thirteen dead bodies in camp. An old gentleman went out to get some wood, and the wolves caught him and ate and carried off his body. All that remained was his shoes and the feet were in them.

Our cattle were droopy for want of food, and from this time on we had to cut down trees for them to brouse upon and still they died off fast, as many as twenty-five per day.

In fact, they would rather die than live; and so much was this the feeling that a strong guard was kept at the rear to drive them along. They appeared to be like a lot of worn out cattle, lost all modesty and had no feeling for anything except to eat and die, but I cannot find language to express the sufferings of these people, and God forbid that I should ever witness such scenes again.

The next morning all the weakest of the company were put in wagons, and they were soon on the road and left the camp behind to follow as best they could. At this point our Captain John A. Hunt concluded we must leave some of our wagons. We had only saved one ox and one cow of our team. We were disabled and left our wagon and all our trunks and baggage except bedding and necessary clothing. Brother H. J. Newman had two yoke of cattle left, and we concluded to double up with him and hitch up our cow and ox. So we left our all, as it were, and started out on rations of one fourth pound of flour per day and using such cattle as dropped in the yoke. We would knock them in the head and cut their throats and take the best meat. You may judge what kind it was. We made a kind of soup with it, and stirred our flour in and made a sort of a porridge with it. We traveled about 200 miles in this condition. Our cattle continued giving out until we reached Fort Bridger 115 miles from Salt Lake City. At this point we were forced to camp as our teams were about all dead. The fort was kept by Lewis Robinson. He had some provisions such as flour, corn, and bacon. He sold all he could spare to the emigrants taking in pay jewelry and money, but this soon gave out and was consumed.

In this condition we remained for about ten days, starvation staring us in the face. I shall never forget the feelings of my mother. She called us together and said that she had never seen her dear children cry for bread before, but said the Lord would open up the way and send us some provisions. About midnight of that day when all the camp had retired, we were awakened by a noise such as the yelling of Indians, and all got up expecting the Indians were upon us, but in this we were mistaken. The noise was caused by the teamsters of the relief train. Their wagons were loaded with flour. I will leave you to judge our feelings. Suffice it to say the flour was rationed out and all the camp was baking bread. Thus we were delivered from starvation and death by the timely action of Brigham Young in organizing this company and starting them off to save us.

The next morning we started for Salt Lake City. It took us ten days to go 115 miles passing through heavy snows. At night we would clear away the snow and pile some logs up and set them on fire. They would burn all night and helped to keep us from freezing. Our journey over Big Mountain can never be forgotten. The snow had drifted 20 feet deep, and we had to cut channels as much as ten feet deep. I had no shoes or boots on; my feet were in rags. On the morning of the 13th of December 1856 we passed through Emigration Canyon, and as we emerged there from we beheld with joy Salt Lake City about five miles in the distance. At first it was hard to tell whether there was a town or the sage brush covered with snow.

About four p.m. we arrived at the Tithing Yard. There were large crowds of brethren and sisters to meet us, but it was hard work for them to select their friends and relatives. They wept like children to see our pale, emaciated, and care-worn bodies, for we were quite worn out and had but very little strength left. In a short time we were put under the care of the bishops of the various wards and were plentifully supplied with the good things of the earth. Our family was in the care of Bishop Wooley of the 13th Ward, who treated us very kindly and kept us supplied for several days. Then Bishop Isaac M. Stewart from Draper, Salt Lake County, called on us, and we were informed that sister Elizabeth was taken to that place, and he wished us to go also. By this time my brother Richard was working for William S. Godby, a druggist, who had agreed to teach him the business. After consulting together, mother and I concluded to go with Bishop Stewart as he had promised me work and a place for mother. We arrived in Draper at dusk and were taken

to Gurnsey Brown's. A few days after mother hired out to a Mrs. Burnham and I to Mr. Brown. In about three months we went to keeping house.

(Extracted by Jolene Allphin from *Barnard White Family Book*, prepared and edited by Ruth Johnson and Glen F. Harding, Brigham Young University Press, 1967)