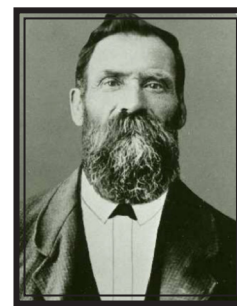


JOSEPH WARREN WADSWORTH

Age: 24
 Born: 16 Dec 1831 Maine
 Rescuer



Joseph was the oldest of ten children born to Abiah and Eliza Ann Hardy Wadsworth. Most of these children were born in the family's home state of Maine. But beginning in 1844, the births of the Wadsworth children parallel the movements of fellow Saints in the Church: 1844 - Hancock County, Illinois; 1849 - Des Moines, Iowa; 1851 - Council Bluffs, Iowa; and finally the last 1,000 miles to Utah in 1851 with the John G. Smith pioneer company. Joseph was 19 years old at the time of his family's immigration and his mother had just given birth to a baby girl.

Of their own immigration, Joseph wrote:

"We left on the 10th day of May. ... We had five yoke of cattle, one span of ponies and three wagons, and four cows. My father drove two yoke of oxen and two cows and I drove three yoke of cattle and two cows. My mother drove the ponies. We all felt fine and had a fine trip with no accidents or sickness on the trip across the plains. We stayed in Salt Lake one night."

Five years later, Joseph returned to help the late companies on the plains who had experienced much sickness and death. Joseph and his wife, Abigail, were living in Uintah, Weber County, Utah, at the time of the rescue. Joseph records his activities of that summer and fall: I put my crop in and tended it, which was composed mostly of corn. I raised a fair crop and then went to work in the canyon hauling wood until November [1856].

About this time the call came for volunteers to meet the Hand Cart Companies. I was in the third call¹ which was composed of myself and a man named Dave Osborn. We went as far as Fort Bridger where we met the last company coming in. We turned around and came back with them. This was the saddest sight I have ever seen. The biggest part of them were given out and nearly frozen to death, some with their feet frozen, some with their hands frozen. It was a sight that would make one's heart ache just to look at them. The next morning after leaving Fort Bridger I was called on to help bury children that had died during the night. We were camped in a big cedar grove and buried the children on the side of the mountain.

Everything went along all right as there was plenty of fuel and provisions, until we came to East Canyon stream. There I was called on again to bury two more children. We had a hard time for the Canyon was full of snow and it was all we could do to get through. The authorities had sent out wagons and men from Salt Lake to put up tents, clear the snow from the ground, and to set the fires so they could start them as soon as we came in sight. They did and it was a welcome sight to see them. I returned home in East Weber.

Sources: *Abiah Wadsworth, His Wives and Family, 1810-1974*, 46; familysearch.org; Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website.

¹Brigham Young issued his first public call for rescue of the late 1856 companies on October 5, as soon as he became aware of their need. On October 26, Heber C. Kimball called for more volunteers to go and help the last companies. As yet, there was no word from the first rescue party that had gone out. More volunteers were enlisted to run cattle and drag logs over the trail from Salt Lake City to Echo Canyon to pack down the snow and keep the trail open. This job was tedious and difficult and in our day somewhat overlooked and thankless. On November 2, Brigham Young spoke in the Tabernacle: "My mind is yonder in the snow, where those immigrating Saints are. . . . Every minute or two my mind reverts to them . . . my brethren and sisters who are on the plains, and what is their condition. . . . We must now rescue those people, and may God help us to do it. Amen." He then encouraged more volunteers to get up teams and go after the late companies. This is likely the "third call" mentioned by Joseph Wadsworth. Brigham Young and his counselors continued to request more help until all were safely in the Valley. See "Brigham Young" in rescuer section of *Tell My Story, Too*.