

## HENRY WEEKS SANDERSON

Born: 13 Mar 1829 Massachusetts

Age: 27

Rescuer



Henry spent most of his boyhood days in Connecticut, where his parents joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The family soon moved to Nauvoo to be with the Saints there. Henry recorded the persecution he suffered during this move:

It was a matter of surprise to me how it was that I could not stroll through a town or city during our emigration, without the boys getting into crowds and calling me a Mormon. That I cared nothing about, but frequently they would threaten me, and proceed to carry those threats into execution. Then there would be a row. If their numbers were considerable, being fleet of foot, and not fearing being overtaken by the best of them, I would keep them off with sticks and stones.

Henry also wrote about what the religious climate of the community was like in Connecticut before joining the Church:

My parents were strict sectarians of the Methodist persuasion. During my school days, there was what was termed a “revival” of the sect in our town; at which time they would congregate together some of their most ranting preachers, and exhort with such spirit and energy as to wake up the slothful and draw in new converts. Parents that were themselves believers, upon the occasion of which I am speaking, held out inducements to their children to go to the mourner’s bench and be prayed for, that they might be converted. They were taught to believe that if they were sincere, a change of heart would be experienced. ... Boys were hired in various ways to go to the mourner’s bench. Some receiving new suits of clothes, and others, other kinds of presents. But as for myself, I was naturally of a religious turn of mind, and had no other thought than that the sect that my parents belonged to was the right one. It needed but little persuasion to induce me to try and get religion. I, therefore, went three nights in succession to the mourner’s bench and strove as earnestly as was possible for me to do, fully believing that to obtain religion was essential to my salvation. And that if I failed, I would be destined to welter an eternity of ages in Hell. But all my exertions were in vain, as I experienced no change, and could not act the hypocrite. ... But upon observation, I noticed that it seemed an easy matter for some of the really mean boys of the place to get religion. Since I could perceive no change in their conduct, I finally came to the conclusion that those boys acted the hypocrite. ... I still attended meetings and Sunday Schools and made a practice of reciting whole chapters from the Bible at each school. But I made no more endeavors to obtain religion.

The year 1856 found Henry married and living at Fort Supply, which was then in Utah Territory. He wrote a little of the sacrifice required to move there:

I had been punctual in paying my produce tithing, but had been charged \$47.00 a year on labor tithing, that being the rule with parties that did not till twenty-five acres of land. I had embraced every opportunity to keep it up by labor, hauling hay, etc. in to Salt Lake City, but I continued behind. I turned in my house and lot to square up. I sold my land for a span of ponies and harness and, I think, a cow and started for Fort Supply. ... The Spring of 1854 ... I put in a small crop that season. Snow storms came onto it before it was harvested. The wheat was frostbitten but we were compelled to make bread of it. It was better in mush than in bread as it could not be cooked in any manner but what it would be sticky.

Two years later, Henry made another sacrifice:

I [went] back on the road to help the handcart company, the one that was so belated and suffered much. One of my horses generally objected to doing much pulling. When I met the company the loads from several handcarts were loaded into my wagon, filling it to the top of the box. The carts were lashed to the rear of the wagon. Then as many persons as could sit comfortably got onto the load, leaving no place for me except on the edge of the front end gate, which I never used except in crossing streams. People were surprised at the way my team would pull. I was somewhat surprised myself because of the one horse before mentioned. Another thing that surprised me was to find that the women of the handcart company had endured the hardships better than the men.

Henry wrote the following poem: Our Father has concluded, our integrity to try / To see if we will qualify to inherit realms on high. / He, therefore, does behoove us to continue staunch and true, / Remembering what the enemy caused our Savior to pass through. / He has, no doubt, reward received, with other faithful ones. / A crown awaits us also, but first a crown of thorns. / Then, and if we prove faithful, a crown we’ll surely wear, / And look back with modest pride on what we passed through here.

Source: “Autobiography of Henry W. Sanderson,” 1884.