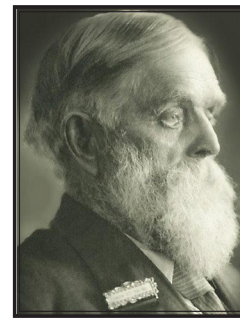


## ISAAC JOHN WARDLE

Born: 14 June 1835 Ravenstone, Leicestershire, England

Age: 20

Martin Handcart Company



Isaac Wardle's autobiography tells us about his childhood, conversion, and immigration. He wrote: "I had four brothers and one sister. I did not have the privilege to go to school much as I was put to work at the age of 7 years old. At 9 years old I was to work in the lead mines. I was after put to work to learn the rope making business. I only stayed at that work a short time as the family moved to the town of Coalville. I was put to work in a coal mine again. I continued to work at the same place till I was 18 years old."

Often when Isaac came home after ten or twelve hours of work, he would sit at the table his mother had prepared and fall asleep while eating. It was about this time and under these circumstances that he heard and accepted the Gospel as preached by "Mormon" missionaries and began to consider emigrating. "On September 23, 1853, I was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Elder Frederick Smith. ... In a short time I moved to the town of Worcel. ... I stayed there till I saved money enough to immigrate to America. Then I went to father and mother, brothers and sister again till the spring of 1856. On the 19th day of May I bid them all good-bye and left for Liverpool." [All family members, including his half-brother, Thomas Morton, were also baptized and immigrated later.]

Isaac set sail from Liverpool on the ship *Horizon*. Also on board was the Ashton family. Many years later, Mary Ashton would become Isaac's wife. (See Sarah Ellen Ashton story in *Tell My Story, Too*.) "We were on the sea 5 weeks. Arrived in Boston Saturday 10 A.M., stayed there two days, then took train for Iowa City. ... We stayed there a short time and then started for Council Bluffs with Hand Carts. Distance was 300 miles. We did not have difficulty on the road. We crossed the Missouri River at Florence. Stayed there a short time to fill out for the plains. Edward Martin continued to be our President and Captain. ... When we left Florence I had on my handcart a young man 18 years old by the name of Langley Bailey and 100 lbs flour and tent and Camp equipment for 7 persons, with John Bailey [Langley's 15-year-old brother] to help me pull it."

Langley Bailey had become extremely ill at Florence. A doctor was consulted and he informed Langley's parents that Langley would die if they took him on this journey. Franklin D. Richards and Cyrus H. Wheelock had arrived in Florence. Sister Bailey asked them to administer to Langley. They blessed him that he would survive the trek to live in Zion.

Langley felt badly about the sacrifice that Isaac and John were making for him. He said he was determined to get away one day, "lay down under a sagebrush and die. I saw my father and mother and my cart pass by, I stretched out to die. Just then a voice said, 'Your mother is hunting you—jump up.' I saw mother in haste coming towards me, wanting to know what had gone wrong with me. I told her I had planned to lay down and die. I felt it was too much to pull me on the cart, at the same time have as much luggage as they could manage—[she] scolded me a little. She reminded [me] what I was promised by Apostle Franklin D. Richards. I rode on the cart until the teams from the Valleys met us."

Isaac, John, and others cared for Langley, pulling him through swift and freezing waters and across sandy and backbreaking terrain, helping save his life. As nightly guard duty became a more frequent assignment, and as cold weather set in and rations were cut, Isaac's strength began to wane. Isaac recorded, "Our old men and women commenced to give way with some young people too. We kept moving on a little every day. Some of our brethren and sisters and children commenced to die and give out by the wayside. I myself fell to the ground and lay for some time."

The company was met by rescuers at the end of October and helped as far as Devil's Gate before severe weather caused them to stop again. They took shelter for several days in a ravine now known as Martin's Cove. The company captains, fellow travelers, and the rescuers often gave these weary travelers tasks to keep them moving in order to stay alive. Some were forced to run, such as Agnes Caldwell of the Willie company and Margaretta Clark of the Martin company. (See their stories in the Willie and Martin sections of *Tell My Story, Too*.)

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Isaac witnessed the desperation of Langley's mother in keeping her husband going: "We camped at a place [that was] after called Martins Hole. [Nov. 4-9] We could not go any further for Snow. My father went to gather some brush willows, etc., there being no wood, to keep me warm. His hand became very benumbed. He laid down by my side [and] told mother he was going to die. (It was not any trouble to die.) Mother took hold of him, gave him a shaken up, and told him she was going on to the valleys. He then gave up dying." (Langley Bailey)

Other histories record the need for immigrants to gather their own wood at Martin's Cove. (See John Jaques and George Padley stories in *Tell My Story, Too* for example.) Isaac did not write about it himself, but a biography by his great-grandson, Dr. Orrin D. Wardle, indicates what Isaac told his family members: "When they were found in their most desperate condition on the plains of Wyoming, when they appeared to have almost given up and were seemingly awaiting the arrival of a merciful death, rescuers came from the Salt Lake Valley. Those rescuers literally had to force some of them to go hunt for wood which they found just over a small hill." (Wardle, 33.)

Isaac's biography does not indicate where this event happened. He recorded, "About this time Joseph A. Young and Ephraim Hanks came to our camp at noon one day and told us that horse teams was coming to meet us from Salt Lake City with provisions. In 2 days we met 10 teams. More teams continued to meet every day on, so we left our hand carts at Pacific Springs. By this time quite a number had died, which I helped to bury."<sup>1</sup>

It is not possible to discern from Isaac's autobiography where this event happened, since Joseph Young and Ephraim Hanks were never together on the rescue and most of the handcarts were left at Devil's Gate. The Martin company met "10 teams" two days after the arrival of Joseph Young on October 28, and "10 teams" about 5 days after the arrival of Ephraim Hanks on November 10. Neither Young nor Hanks were at the camp in Martin's Cove. Joseph Young was on an express ride to Salt Lake City to report to his father, and Ephraim Hanks did not arrive until the evening of the second day after the Martin company left the cove. Nevertheless, there are some tree stumps "over a small hill" in Martin's Cove that were identified by Bishop Maddock of the Riverton Stake in 1991 as being old enough to qualify for the time period that the Martin company was there. Many similar stumps in Martin's Cove were photographed by Elder David and Sister Kaye Freeman while they served as directors at the historic site. Rescuer Harvey Cluff records cutting wood in Martin's Cove, as does John Jaques of the Martin company. The tree stumps "over a small hill" in Martin's Cove are natural artifacts that tell a dramatic story of human need, regardless of who cut them or when.

Isaac concluded his autobiography: "It continued to be very cold and stormy and some of them dying most every day. We got to Salt Lake City, Utah, about 11 O'Clock A.M. Sunday morning, 30th day of November, 1856. President Brigham Young with many other brethren and sisters bid us welcome and took us to their homes. By night we all had places to lay our heads down, rest in comfort, to rest our weary bodies."

Isaac worked for and lived with the Beckstead family, whose son, Henry, had also helped with the rescue. In 1858, Isaac and Alex Beckstead Jr. homesteaded in South Jordan, where they helped to build each other's houses.

Isaac married three times, had fifteen children, and was always active in church and civic affairs. Mary Ashton, his second wife, was probably introduced to him by his good friend Alex, whose brother, Thomas Beckstead, had married Mary's sister, Sarah Ellen Ashton. Mary and Isaac would have shared a special bond with their common experiences in the Martin handcart company. Sadly, Mary died shortly after bearing one son, William "Haston" Wardle. Having been deprived of much education as a child, Isaac studied on his own at night, reading all the books he could get. He practiced writing using a shovel for his slate and charcoal for his pencil by the light from his fireplace. He always had a strong desire to gain knowledge.

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On November 28, 1916, Langley Bailey wrote a poignant letter to his handcart friend, Isaac Wardle. He had never forgotten the kindness that Isaac had shown him during the Martin company's journey:

Nephi Nov 28/16

Isaac J. Wardle Esq,

My Dear Most Respected Old Friend.

How are you? I was much disappointed because I did not meet you at our annual Handcart meeting.

I hope and pray that you are well in health in your old age and prospering. Very pleased to tell you I am well, getting old. This time last year I was in California. I visited Los Angeles, thence to San Diego, thence to Old Mexico, thence to San Francisco. We took lots of trips. Visited the Fair both at San Diego and San Francisco, with my wife, son and daughter and daughter's husband. We met our son at Frisco who had been to Australia on a mission. We enjoyed our trip very much.

I organized a H.C. Daughters in Nephi. I am sending you a clipping of a newspaper, thinking you would enjoy the lines I penned and wrote. Well Isaac, I have got me an automobile. We take much pleasure in it, visiting around amongst relations. You and me are in much better conditions than we were at this time 60 years ago. I can remember one morning, every tent was blowed down but ours. You did stake our tent down strong and firm.

My dear Brother, I honor and respect you much more than I can explain. You and my brother John (he was only a boy 15) hauled me in the handcart for hundreds of miles. Can I forget you? Can I ever repay for your kindness? No. No. I have just made my will. I have 6 sons & 6 daughters. I am doing right by all of them. All receive equal. I let nothing pass out of my hands until me and wife passes away. You know my second wife died. Her children receives the same as all the rest.

You know I was on a mission in England. 4 of my sons [have] been on foreign missions. Cross the deep sea. One of my sons has just gone on another mission. One of my sons is a Bishop. He seems to fill the bill well.

I will now close my dear old boy. I am writing without the use of glasses. My hand is steady. In March I will be 79. You are 81.

God bless you. May peace crown your latter days. Please let me hear from you. Get someone to write for you. I am yours Very Respectfully,

Langley A. Bailey

Sources: "Reminiscences and Journal of Langley Allgood Bailey," Mormon Immigration Index—Personal Accounts (*Horizon*), and Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website; Olsen, Andrew D., *The Price We Paid*, 2006; "History of Mary Goble Pay," in Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; "John Bailey Sr. and Jane Allgood," family history compiled and written by Ona Peterson Howell, 2005; *Following the Pathways of Our Loved Ones: Bailey, Allgood and Associated Families*, collected and prepared by Grace Evelyn Bailey Hull, 1980; letter to Isaac Wardle courtesy David L. Bailey; "William Ashton: Handcart Pioneer and Five-Year Foot Soldier," by Curtis R. Allen; *Millennial Star*, Dec. 31, 1888, p. 839; "An Incident in the Life of William Ashton," 34-page unpublished compilation by his great-grandson, Dr. Orrin D. Wardle; Daughters of Utah Pioneer history files; *Life History and Writings of John Jaques, Including a Diary of the Martin Handcart Company*, by Stella Jaques Bell, 1978; other photos and family histories sent to Jolene Allphin by Della Jean Harris—2005, David and Kaye Freeman—2010, Billy Wardle—2008, Donna Olsen—2004, and Lynn D. Wardle—2005; letter from Donna Olsen to Harvey W. Thompson, January 3, 1993.

<sup>1</sup> Two of the three typed copies of the autobiographical sketch of Isaac Wardle are almost identical. The third one is quite different in some places and introduces further discrepancies in logistics. While the intent of this book is to focus on the sacrifices and experiences of the pioneers, not on the mistakes in reminiscences, an excerpt from the third sketch transcript is given in this footnote as a matter of interest and reference: "At one time I became so weary and over come with cold that I fell down and was forced to lay there for some time. About this time one day while we were stopped for noon two men rode into our camp, they were "Joseph Young" and Ephraim Hanks who had come to tell us that men were coming to meet us with teams and wagons from Salt Lake City. We met the first team at Pacific Springs, Wyoming who had provisions for us with them. By this time our company was much smaller than when we left Council Bluffs, as so many had died some had stopped at different places along the way. We proceeded on to Salt Lake City with the teams leaving our handcarts behind. We arrived there Nov. 30, 1856 having taken us Six (6) months and five (5) days to come from Liverpool England to Salt Lake City U.S.A. President Brigham Young along with many of the other Brethren and Women came to welcome us and took us into their homes, fed and warmed us and gave us warm clean beds to rest our weary bodies."