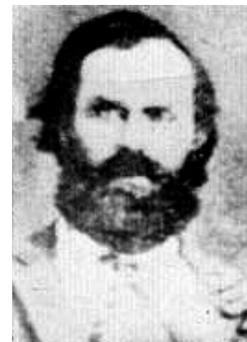


## JOHN PULSIPHER



Born: July 17, 1827, in Spafford, Onondago, New York

Age: 29

Rescuer

“I, John Pulsipher, was born in the town of Spafford, Onondago County, State of New York, North America, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July, 1827, this being the year that Joseph Smith got the plates which contain the Book of Mormon. When I was four years old, said book was published and one copy came into our town. Father got it and read it. He, with the neighbors, Elijah Cheney, S. Roundy and others, would sit and read and talk day and night ’till they read it thru and thru. They believed it was brought forth by the power of God, to prepare the way for the second coming of the Son of Man. It was just what they were looking for.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, John Pulsipher grew up in the gospel from boyhood and experienced a full range of early Church history. In 1856, John was located at the Ft. Supply mission, “approximately 12 miles southwest of the more widely known Ft. Bridger. Ft. Supply was established in November 1853 under the direction of Orson Hyde. Brigham Young hoped the settlement would provide crops and supplies for the Saints who were traveling west and defray costs of sending supplies overland from Salt Lake City to Fort Bridger, a distance of approximately 120 miles.”<sup>2</sup>

John served as the clerk of the Ft. Supply Mission and at various times as the Presiding Elder there.<sup>3</sup> Excerpts from John Pulsipher’s Ft. Supply record<sup>4</sup> of 1856 reveal many interesting and important facts about the rescue of the handcart companies:

**September: On the 17<sup>th</sup>,** Parley P. Pratt & a company of about 25 Elders passed, on their way to the states & England.<sup>5</sup> We carried a few bushels of potatoes to them, also some butter and cheese.<sup>6</sup> Many of the men from here are going to the Valley to get provisions. Many are going to winter there on account of crops failing here.

**October: On the 8<sup>th</sup>** of October we had a cold snowstorm,<sup>7</sup> continuing half of the day & most of the night. Snow only lays 2 or 3 inches deep besides what melted as it fell.

**Thursday the 9<sup>th</sup>** we fasted and prayed for the good of the mission & the prosperity of Zion, etc. The snow went off today. We carried in victuals & fed 70 Indians.

**Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup>,** a snowy day.<sup>8</sup> As we were in meeting, Elder T[homas] D. Brown arrived from the Valley. He was one of the home missionaries.

Bro Bullock called on him to speak to the people. So he arose & said last Monday [October 13th] Prest. Young, Kimball & Grant, Gen. Wells & a few others started for this place, traveled 25 miles & camped on E. Canyon near the upper cottonwood grove. The next morn Prest Young was taken very sick—an awful pain seized him almost instantly. He fell to the ground & could not bear to be moved to the wagon for some time. The Brethren administered to him, & Bros Kimball & Grant went out & prayed. ... It was made known to them that they should move from that place as soon as possible. They went in & told the Prest the revelation they had when it was decided that they should all go back Except Bro Brown & John Tobin who should come & survey the Camp. ... The council met a number of times this week & decided how the land should be surveyed. Bro. Brown [went?] with some of the Brethren to help them commence & continue the surveying. The weather cold & snowy.

**On the 22<sup>nd</sup>,** Bishop A.O. Smoot came for some help to move the train of goods belonging to the Church that he had been to the states to bring up. He wants help [to] move from G[reen] River to Ft. Bridger. Bro. Smoot stayed overnight & the Brethren assembled & heard him preach on the wars & destruction that have already commenced.<sup>9</sup> ... He acknowledged the hand of the Lord in preserving him to get back to mountains. At the close of the meeting, ox teams were volunteered for the above purpose.<sup>10</sup>

John Pulsipher 1, Josh Terry 1 } 2  
 A.W. Baker 1, Geo. B. Teeple 1 } 2  
 James Ivie 3, Wm Lish 1 } 4  
 Moroni Cole 1, Isaac Baum 1 } 2  
 Alma Taylor 1, Thos. Slater 1 } 2

[Total] 12

Amounting to 12 yoke of oxen. M[oroni] Cole; M[osiah] Tracy<sup>11</sup> & T. Slater volunteered to go & drive. They were only gone 4 days.

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**On the Eve of the 27<sup>th</sup>** an express arrived from the [Willie] handcart co. that was at the Sweetwater—stating they were in a deplorable situation. The snow a foot deep & weather very cold—32 had died in 5 days.<sup>12</sup> Bro Bullock called a meeting & said the horse teams were wanted to go immediately to their relief when the Brethren offered their teams as follows:

Sidney Kelley 1 horse & wagon, Eli Tracy 1, Geo B. Teeple 1, A.W. Baker 1, H.W. Sanderson<sup>13</sup> 2, J. Bingham 2 mules, Joshua Terry 2, T.D. Brown 2 mules, H.[?]M. Russell 2, making 7 teams & 6 wagons.

The following Brethren volunteered to go & drive the teams: H.W. Sanderson, J. Terry, J. Cole,<sup>14</sup> Mosiah Tracy, H.M. Russell, & J. Bingham, who being the oldest man was chosen to take charge of the [?] Started next morning with provision & horse feed.

**November: Monday the 3<sup>d</sup>** The co that went to help the handcart co, returning, having brought up the co as far as Bridger [on Nov. 2] & met plenty of teams from the Valley who were called out on Sunday morn the 26 of Oct.

The word of the Lord came to Prest. B. Young at that time, it being the very morning that the express started from Sweetwater[,] a distance of upwards of 200 mi. The Lord showed Prest. Young the situation of those handcart cos [Willie and Martin] & told him to call out 500 teams to go forthwith & bring them in.

The call was made in the public congregation by a “Thus Saith the Lord.”<sup>15</sup> The teams were on the road to meet the sufferers before the express<sup>16</sup> arrived[,] who traveled as fast as possible, getting fresh horses every chance, but with all the [?] of man, it was not enough. The Lord made bare his almighty arm for the deliverance of his people which is another proof that the Lord makes his will known to his servant the prophet. To show you how times are in the Valley & to keep safe the advice & council of Prest. Young, we will record a letter that he sent to us:

Presidents Office  
G Salt Lake City Oct 24/56

To Lewis Robinson & Isaac Bullock

Dear Brethren, Your note per Mr. Gilbert arrived this day and I improve the opportunity of sending out tomorrow by Bro. Barker to reply. We also were disappointed I'm not paying you a visit which we had long contemplated and finally attempted but as you have been already informed was obliged to return owing to my severe sickness.

My health now is quite improved. So severe an attack could not well but be soon over one way or the other & I feel thankful that I am yet spared to live upon the earth and witness the salvation of God. The weather for a few days has been quite cold. Some snow falling on the mountains. We are informed that it fell a foot deep in Tooele, but the ground is bare in this valley and the weather growing a little warmer.

We feel quite anxious in regard to our emigration companies and wish you to render them all the assistance you can that will add to their comfort or expedite them upon their journey.

In regard to your survey at your place we do not consider it necessary to make an entire survey of the ranch but to have some points determined and lines run so that you get the lay of the land & be able to tell your whereabouts. Fort Supply probably better make a survey of small lots that they can enclose with a good substantial wall near their farming land if a suitable site exists for its location. The brethren who have been so long located in that region traveling through and fro over the country should know where the best place is for a city or a fort. High ground should be a consideration not easily approachable by an enemy without observation. The lots must necessarily be small in order to be enclosed, neither should the farming lots be too large, as you will always find it better to cultivate a little land well, than more land not well.

We feel gratified to save that region of country so peacefully brought into control of law & so salutary an influence extended not only over the transient settlers but the native which we hope will continue & become permanent. That is an important point & should be maintained not only for the good influence above alluded to, but for agricultural purposes & for the assistance of emigrants & travelers.

When the handcart trains advance as far as your neighborhood we wish you to put your teams into the trains. There may be many teams at Ft. Supply. Let all be raised that can be spared and if the weather should shut down so that they shouldn't return they can be maintained here and return in the spring. We are still sanguine that it will moderate and we yet have a spell of pleasant weather before winter in which case they can return, but if it should continue cold and stormy and those emigrating with handcarts come along needing help at Fort Supply and Bridger, do the utmost for their relief. Let them pick up women and children and the infirm and bring them in.

All is well with us, peace and quietness prevailing. May the Lord bless you with wisdom from on high to

## (John Pulsipher - Page 3)

guide you in all things and give you health and strength to sustain you in every time of need is the prayer of your brother in the Gospel of Christ. Brigham Young

The foregoing letter you see was written before the news of the suffering of the handcart cos. reached the valley & before the letter reached us. We had heard of their suffering & sent our teams to their assistance with men to drive, taking provisio, fodder, etc.

We had also got our surveying commenced exactly as Prest. Young advised although his advice did not reach us til after we had done it.

**On the 5 [Nov]** [the] snow storm commenced, snowed 30 hours & cleared off cold as [Greenland?]<sup>—</sup> continued sharp winter weather for some time, we had to haul our wheat in the snow in order to save it, as the storms come so often that before it was dry, another came.

**On Tuesday Eve Nov. 11** ... The Teachers of Ft. Supply took it upon themselves to act as a committee to get up a feast. ... About 70 persons assembled at 4 P.M. Altho we were in our poverty because of the failure of crops etc, we truly had a sumptuous feast—one that would have done honor to any of the old cities of the world. Bro Bullock<sup>17</sup> expressed his thanks to us for the honor that was shown him & blessed us in the name of the Lord & said we should prosper. While we were seated at the table, the news came<sup>18</sup> that the last cos, of handcarts [Martin Company] were perishing in the snow on Sweetwater, & that the teams sent from the valley [have] turned back before meeting them. Prest. Bullock called for volunteers to go & save that perishing people—every man present was ready to start with all his team & being anxious to do all in their power to help them. It was proposed that we, out of our scanty supply, send them horse feed to save their starving teams, Isaac Bullock offered 500 lbs. fodder, Jared Bullock offered 500 lbs. fodder, John Pulsipher offered 500 lbs. fodder, A.W. Baker offered 1,000 lbs. fodder, E.B. Ward offered 200 lbs. fodder. Enough of our men stayed to keep the Ft. & Bro. Bullock, with the rest, & what horses & oxen were able to go, started on **Wednesday, the 12<sup>th</sup>**, with all the speed possible & as they went, stopped all the Valley teams & bring them back to help that co before the return to the Valley. The news was sent to Prest Young that the great majority of the teams that he sent out had turned back when they came to the deep snow near the S. Pass. The Gov sent Wm Kimball to turn those around in short order & not return til they bring in those poor Saints that are perishing in the snow.

Those men said the reason they turned back was because they could hear nothing from the last handcart co & supposed they had gone back to the States or made their winter quarters in the Buffalo country. But they were very much blamed for letting the devil put any such thots into their heads—when the word of the Lord comes for men to do anything they ought not to turn back for a little snow, or the fear of loosing their horses or any other foolish notion—If the trials are great or the circumstances unfavorable, go ahead & trust in the Lord that called us, for he never tells men to do anything except he gives them strength to do it if they are faithful.

Our horse teams helped the handcart co. that were destitute & the ox teams went back to help [the Hodgett and Hunt] ox trains.

**Nov 1856 Sund. 23** Sat. Eve. Bro. Bullock returned & preached to those that are at this place on Sund 23, says they had got the emigration all this side of the South Pass & all the foot cos. were in the wagons & making good progress towards the Valley. Many of those foot cos. have died & many have froze their feet. The weather has been rough, snow flying in the air a great portion of the time for a month, although it has not fell in the road so as to stop the travel.

**On Thursday the 27 [Nov.]** the news came that the last ox train of our emigration was way beyond Green River & not able to get up to here without more help, the teams that were sent from Ft. Supply were doing all they could & could only move a part of the co. at a time & the people had to eat the poor cattle as they gave out, to save their own lives.

Bro. [John] Harvey was out on the road, sent to fill to the teachers to see what could be done. A meeting was called, this being made known. Every man was wide awake to do something more to help them that are in trouble. We gathered all the cattle we could get whether the owners were here or not & by yoking odd steers together & as a few more teams that had been to the Valley for provisions had returned, we made out 13 yoke of cattle. The women baked a lot of bread while we were arranging the teams etc. All this was done & the teams on the march in about 2 hours in charge of Bro. Mumford & [Jarvis?].

Prest. Harvey returned from the road this 27 & was much pleased with what we had done & invited all hands to turn out tomorrow to commence the meeting house that we have talked of building.

About 400 persons are at Bridger without teams to go to the Valley & they are nearly out of provision & we have not the assistance for them.

## (John Pulsipher - Page 4)

**December:** Prest. Harvey & W. Lish started on the 4 Dec to take those of the co to the Valley that froze their feet so they will have to be cut off. He left Wm. Thompson to take charge or preside over the meeting & E. Whipple to take charge of the public work.

On Sunday Eve [Dec.] the 7<sup>th</sup> as we were devising some means for the support of this last co. of our emigration which we supposed would have to winter here, we all seemed willing to divide our scanty portion of bread with them & do as well for them as we do for ourselves—the news came that teams & flour were on the way to take them to the Valley.<sup>19</sup>

John Pulsipher continued to record interesting and informative details of the activities of the people involved at Ft. Supply and throughout the “Shoshone Mission.” The winter of 1856-1857 continued cold and difficult in many ways. Journal entries were made regarding those who came and went from Salt Lake City on snowshoes. Babies were born to families. Members of the “variety school” were expected to “produce something ... read, recite, speak on some subject, sing a song, tell an anecdote, or do something to amuse or instruct the co[mpany].” They were cautioned not to have too many comic routines so they wouldn’t take away from the spirit of the “Reformation” that was going on. A mountain man who came to winter at Ft. Supply was hired to teach the Indian language at the day school. Before long, the man had also been taught the gospel and requested baptism.

John was a successful and hardworking pioneer throughout his life. His last call was to pioneer in southern Utah, where he and others built a town they called “Hebron.” John recorded:

When we got ready to locate our town, Pres. E. Snow and Bro. George A. Burgon, surveyor, made us a visit 28<sup>th</sup> of Aug. [1868]. Located and surveyed a town site which we named Hebron, a scripture name. We read that Abraham separated from Lot, his brother’s son, and moved to get room for his large flocks and herds, and when he came to a place suitable for his business, he located and kept his flocks there and called the place Hebron because there was plenty of feed for his animals and he built an altar and offered sacrifice to the Lord.

It being somewhat so with us when Bro. Snow gave us a mission to take care of the stock of St. George, we moved on ’til we came to Shoal Creek, the first place we found suitable for our business—where there was plenty of feed for our flocks—so we located ourselves and called the place Hebron and gave thanks to the Lord.

John Pulsipher passed away on July 9, 1891, and was laid to rest in the Hebron town cemetery.

<sup>1</sup>“Autobiography of John Pulsipher,” from “A Short Sketch of the History of John Pulsipher,” reprinted 1970, copy in files of Jolene Allphin.

<sup>2</sup>Andrew Jenson, “Fort Supply,” *Improvement Era*, July 1921, quoted from Mormon Historic Sites Foundation website, 2006.

<sup>3</sup>See Gowans, Frederick Ross and Campbell, Eugene Edward, *Fort Supply: Brigham Young’s Green River Experiment*, Brigham Young University Publications, 1976.

<sup>4</sup>Pulsipher’s record is titled “A sketch of THE HISTORY OF A COMPANY OF ELDERS Sent by the church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints on the SHOSHONE MISSION 1855.” Excerpts used were transcribed by Jolene Allphin from Pulsipher’s handwritten record, with minor editing for clarity or readability. Available at Church History Library and DUP history files.

<sup>5</sup>Parley P. Pratt was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. These elders were on their way east to serve missions. They were also mentioned in the journals of the Willie and Martin Handcart Company members.

<sup>6</sup>This is one example of the supporting mission of Ft. Supply.

<sup>7</sup>The late emigrating companies did not have their first snowstorm for 11 more days.

<sup>8</sup>George D. Grant’s advance rescue party went through the area during this time between Oct. 9th and 19th. They did not pass through Ft. Supply. This was not necessary as the main trail went through Ft. Bridger.

<sup>9</sup>This was a reference to the current strife regarding slavery issues in Kansas and Missouri, from where Smoot was returning.

## (John Pulsipher - Page 5)

<sup>10</sup>This rescue was only for the Abraham O. Smoot wagon train, which was then at Green River. At that time, those at Ft. Supply appeared to be unaware of the late immigration farther east, i.e. the Willie, Martin, Hodgett and Hunt companies.

<sup>11</sup>Moroni Cole is James Cole's brother. M. Tracy is rescuer Moses Mosiah Tracy. See James Cole's biography included with Lucy Ward's of the Willie Company, and Mosiah Tracy's biography in Rescuer section of *Tell My Story, Too*. Another brother, John Cole, was also a rescuer.

<sup>12</sup>This seems to be the same express rider(s) who left the Willie Rescue Site on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, brought the message to Redick Allred at his South Pass camp on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, then continued on with his message, arriving at Ft. Supply on Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>. Thus, it had been five days since he had left the Willie Rescue Site. From the time the Willie Company left Iowa City on July 16th, up to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, the Willie Company journal records 35 total deaths (not 35 in the 5 days prior to October 22).

<sup>13</sup>This is Henry Weeks Sanderson. See biography in *Tell My Story, Too*.

<sup>14</sup>This is most likely John Cole, brother of James and Moroni Cole. John Cole is on the original roster of rescuers prepared by researcher Lyndia Carter for the LDS Church. Carter gave a copy of this roster to Laura Anderson on May 22, 2012. "J.Cole" would not have been James Cole for the following reasons: James Cole is not on any record of being at Ft. Supply prior to the rescue. He was with William H. Kimball and the advance rescue party under George D. Grant at the Willie Rescue Site. This advance rescue party had bypassed Ft. Supply as they headed east on the rescue. James may have left from Salt Lake City to travel with this group, or he may have been at Ft. Bridger when they came through and gone with them from there. James met Lucy Ward of the Willie Handcart Company for the first time at the Willie Rescue Site. He had seen Lucy wearing a fur hat and a green mantilla in a dream before arriving at the rescue site. He told William Kimball of his dream about his "future wife." Kimball replied, "We will see no beautiful girl with a fur cap and a green veil in these frozen Saints." However, as William was the first to notice Lucy on their arrival in the Willie camp, he said to James, "Brother Jim, there is your dream girl." James and Lucy were married at Ft. Bridger, less than 2 weeks later, on the return trip. As Lucy was too ill to travel, they stayed at Ft. Bridger and Ft. Supply through the winter. Other evidence indicating that "J. Cole" is John Cole, is that which suggests that John Cole and Mosiah Tracy were friends. They were the same age and had both been born in Far West, Missouri, where their parents were neighbors. Mosiah Tracy went to California after the rescue and was never heard from again. He would not have made this trip alone. The very complete genealogy records of the Cole family show no information about John Cole after 1856. There is no death date for him. I suspect he went to California with Mosiah Tracy. Another fact that lends credence to this opinion is that Moroni Cole moved his family to California a few years later. The last of Moroni's children were born in California and most of the family died there. Moroni may have gone to California partly to look for his lost brother. Lucy Ward's biographies state that Lucy wrote a history for the Cole family. Finding that history in the future may tell us more and whether these suppositions are valid.

<sup>15</sup>Brigham Young was recognized by rescuers and emigrants alike for his inspiration in calling out so much help for the beleaguered companies, weeks before they were caught in the cold, or their whereabouts were known. While waiting at Martin's Cove for the weather to moderate and wagons to be unloaded at Devil's Gate (Nov. 4-9), rescuer Harvey Cluff, said: "The situation was, indeed, very criticle. No power could save the people from death but that of God. To our rescue O Lord God Almighty seemed the fervent prayer constantly offered to our Heavenly Father. The carcass[es] of dead cattle were preserved in a frozen state from wolves for food for the people in case we should be winter bound; which really seemed inevatable. Over four hundred miles of mountainous country lay between the emigrants and their destined home in Utah where snow in winter frequently falls to a [depth] that stops all travel by teams. The only glimmer of hope that seemed to reconcile our feelings and that was the utmost confidence in President Brigham Young's inspiration that he would keep companies coming out to meet us and thereby keep the road opened. They knew, or least the boys from Utah knew, that president's foresight and excellent judgement would be sufficient to grasp the situation of the emigrants and their needs in such an inclement season and therefore teams and supplies would be forwarded train after train until the last Saint should arive safely in Zion. These relief companies following one after another and only but a few days apart would keep the road open, thus insuring the possibillity of our companies moving out as soon as they could leave Devil's Gate. Patience finally rewarded our hopes." Brigham Young issued private and public rescue calls continuously between October 4 and the first two weeks of December. However, on October 26<sup>th</sup>, the voice of the call from the pulpit was Heber C. Kimball. Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal for that day that "President B Young was present [at a prayer meeting, but] he

(John Pulsipher - Page 6)

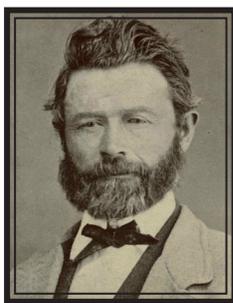
was unwell & did not attend meeting through the day.” Woodruff also noted the call given by Kimball: “President Kimball spoke in the power of God. At the Close of his remarks He Called for all the Horse teams in the City & Country to go into the Mountains & pick up the companies who were coming with hand Carts & bring them into the City. 115 Teams were raised in a few moments. All were to be prepared to start in the morning. They were to take grain to feed them with.”

<sup>16</sup>This refers to the previously mentioned express from the Willie Rescue Site, continuing past Ft. Supply to the valley.

<sup>17</sup>Isaac Bullock, president of the mission.

<sup>18</sup>This news likely came from Lewis Robison at Ft. Bridger. Robison had stopped most of those returning wagons and sent an express to Brigham Young seeking counsel. Most of this large group of rescue wagons had previously reached Ft. Bridger on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and assisted the Willie company who they met there. As they continued on with no word of the location of the Martin company, some began to fear and turned back. See biography of rescuer Anson Call in Allphin, *Tell My Story, Too*, for one group of wagons that did not turn back.

<sup>19</sup>Brigham Young’s first counsel to the Ft. Supply and Ft. Bridger settlements had been to keep the emigration there for the winter if possible or necessary. Lewis Robison, owner of Ft. Bridger and counselor in the mission presidency, sought further counsel from Brigham Young in a letter dated Nov. 27. (See biography for rescuer Lewis Robison in Allphin, *Tell My Story, Too*.) Robison realized they would be unable to support that many people through the winter. But Brigham Young had already continued to call for rescuers to go out and bring the people through the snow-packed mountains to the Salt Lake Valley. On Sunday, November 30, Brigham Young spoke from the Tabernacle. He announced that the Martin company would be arriving shortly and expounded on what their needs would be. At the end of his talk, he made another rousing rescue speech regarding those who would bring in the Hodgett and Hunt companies: “The two wagon companies still out we are sending for, and will supply flour to such as may have to tarry at Forts Bridger and Supply. We do not calculate to have the winter blast stop us; it cannot stop the Mormon Elders, for they have faith, wisdom and courage; they can perform that which no other men on the earth can perform.” (“Remarks,” *Deseret News* [Weekly], 10 Dec. 1856, 320. Remarks by President Brigham Young, Tabernacle, Nov. 30, 1856.)



Charles Pulsipher and William Zerah  
Pulsipher  
were also rescuers



Fort Supply Historical Marker