

28 May 2007

At Martin's Cove I had one of the most spiritual and miraculous experiences of my life. First, two of my great-whatever grandmothers were stranded in Martin's Cove. They were in the Martin Handcart Company that winter of 1856. Their names were Ann Greenhalgh Openshaw and her daughter, Mary Openshaw.



The trail is about 2 miles or so to walk to the Cove from the visitor's center. I walked alone most of the way, and as I got nearer to the Cove, I felt an urgency to get there. I walked faster and faster, and began to cry. When I was almost there, I said in my mind, "Ann and Mary, come with me." Immediately I felt their presences behind me and a little to each side. We formed a triangle with me at the "top," and continued to walk towards the Cove. Ann was on my right side and Mary on my left. I asked them in my thoughts to lead me into the Cove, but they let me know that now is my time to lead--their time to go first has passed. They were still with me as we entered the Cove. I broke down completely and sobbed to them out loud, "I'm so sorry," over and over again. I wanted them to know that I hurt for their suffering. I also committed to them that I will stay true to Christ and His gospel my whole life. They stood still on the path and looked at me. Then I said to them, "Thank you . . . thank you . . . thank you." Instantly they were gone. I felt lonely and empty. But the Lord had allowed me to tell them of my sorrow and express my thanks to them for all they have done for me. This was such a sacred and unusual experience. I am not often allowed to communicate with the spirits gone before because, as the Lord put it in answer to one of my prayers, "You get too homesick."

As a result of this experience, Grandmothers Ann and Mary are as alive and real to me as any embodied person on this earth is. How can I not work harder and more diligently on my family history? How many thousands of relatives do I have, who wait for their temple ordinances to be done so they can continue to progress in the life after this one? I am committed. I will do much better. KCW

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(Excerpt from biography of Mary Alice Curtis Colvin, daughter of Mary Openshaw of Martin Handcart Company, written by Mary Openshaw's granddaughter, Kady Colvin Cluff.)

Mary Alice was the daughter of George Curtis (a pioneer of 1848, born 27 October 1823, Silver Lake, Oakland County, Michigan) and Mary Openshaw (born 25 March 1839, Brigment (sic), Lancashire, England). Mary Openshaw came to Utah in Martin's belated Hand Cart (sic) Company. After weary days of pulling handcarts and lack of food, the members of the company were made happy by temporary relief sent out by President Brigham Young. [During a period of rationing] . . . one night [Mary] said to her father, "I shall die tonight." He turned and looked her in the eyes saying, "No, my girl, you will not die tonight. You will live to reach the valley and there do a great work." Mary made a promise to the Lord that if he would send her food again she would never waste food. Relief supplies came to the company, so her health was restored. She kept her promise, and always taught her children and grandchildren not to complain over good food and never waste even a crust of bread. I don't remember of ever hearing her complain of the food she was given. She was also a natural nurse.