

Pioneer Children Experiences

A Virtual Museum of stories and
experiences of Mormon Pioneer
Children

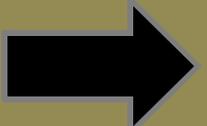
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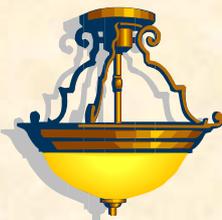
Welcome to the Pioneer Children Experiences Museum!

We hope that you enjoy your time here, and that you get to know what life as a pioneer child was all about!

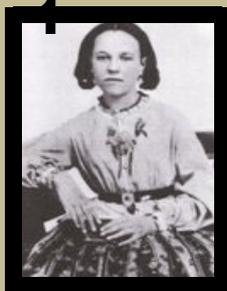
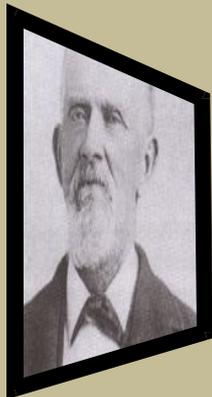
To get through the museum, click on any picture you wish, and you will be able to read a story about that Pioneer child's experience.

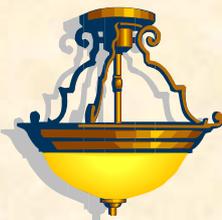
When you see black arrows, click them to either read more information or get back to the room you were just visiting.



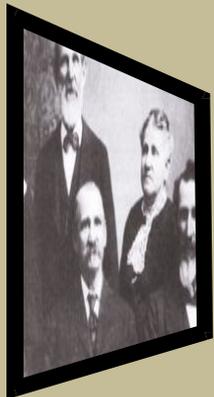
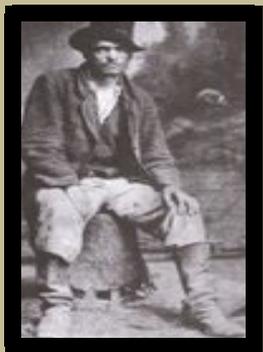


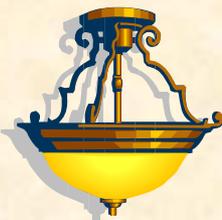
Room





Room 2





Room 3

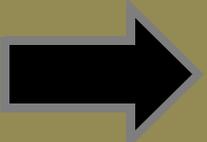


Peter Howard McBride.

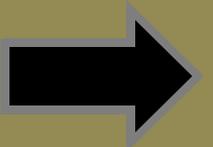
Peter was the age of 6 when his family traveled along with the Edward Martin Handcart Company to find their way to the Salt Lake Valley. In this picture, he is with his wife and baby boy.



"Much Hunger and cold were experienced by these cold and weary travelers; all they had to eat was a little flour, which was cut to $\frac{3}{4}$ a pound per person. Many aged people died; even the young people could not stand the hardships. My baby sister and I were even cut to less flour, and we were really hungry. Our teams (oxen) gave out and died, and we were glad to eat the meat. I remember some men passed us one day and stopped to talk. They gave my baby sister some cookies.

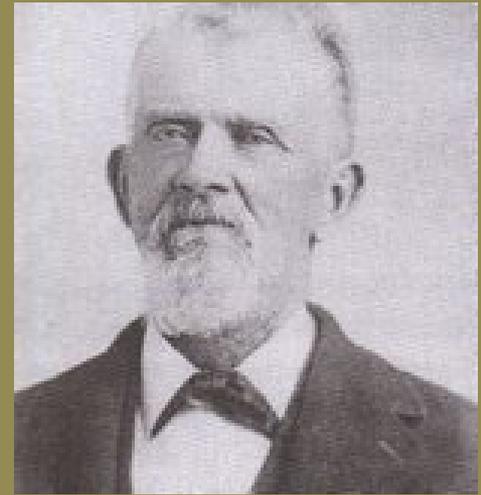


She carried them in her little pocket, and I was always with her and would tease for a bite. She would give me a taste every once in awhile, and it was so good. No cake was ever tasted so good. The exposure to cold, rain, snow, and ice, pushing carts all day, the scarcity of food and wood caused many men to perish."

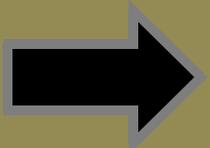


Edwin Alfred Pettit

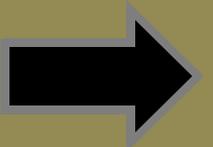
Edwin was orphaned at the age of eight while his parents were living in Nauvoo. He plotted an escape from his guardian so he could join his sister and her husband who were headed west. He was 13 when he made the journey.



"In February, 1846, the people began leaving Nauvoo for the west, and my sister and her husband decided to go with them. I understood that if I was given to go with them, there would be a way provided for me. I wanted to go with my sister, but the rest of the children, and my guardian opposed it. A man was sent from the Mormon camp to pilot me to the camp of my sister, which was some miles away. This young man took me to the camp; but my guardian and brothers followed me and took me back on horseback. In short time there was another man who made an appearance in the neighborhood on the same errand, a man that I was acquainted with. We made an appointment to meet at a certain place, and make our escape if possible. I went downstairs early in the morning and with my shoes in my hands. My guardian was dozing in his chair as I slipped out unknown to him, and put my shoes on outside.."

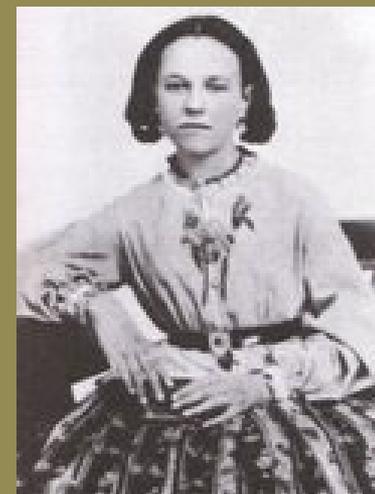


"I soon fell in with my friend, and we tramped all day long without anything to eat to reach the spot where I was to meet my sister. I instead of going into camp, I lay out in the prairie all night alone. The Captain of this company called the people together and told them if there was anybody inquiring of a boy, tell them there is no such boy in this camp; I was not in the camp at the time, I was staying out in the prairie. The parties came hunting for me again, but failed to find me. Disguised as a girl, and traveling with four or five girls, I crossed the Des Moines, Iowa river on a flat boat. I was wearing side combs in my hair and false curls covered my head. I was in a sunbonnet in order to make my disguise more complete."

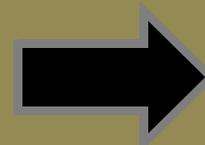


Agnes Caldwell

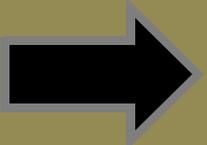
Nine year old Agnes was a member of the 1856 Willie Handcart Company.



"Mother had one boy fifteen years of age, upon whom she was depending for the greater share of the pulling; when only a day or two out he was attempting to lasso a wild cow to be milked, his foot became tangled in the rope. He was thrown on his shoulder and dragged quite a distance, sustaining a broken shoulder. This of course threw the heavy pulling upon Mother. Although only tender years of age, I can yet close my eyes and see everything before me- the ceaseless walking, walking, ever to remain in my memory. Many times I would become so tired and, childlike, would hang on the cart, only to be gently pushed away. Then I would throw myself by the side of the road and cry. Realizing they were all passing me by, I would jump to my feet and make an extra run to catch up. When the wagons started out, a number of us children decided to see how long we could keep up with the wagons, in hopes of being asked to ride. At least that is what my great hope was."

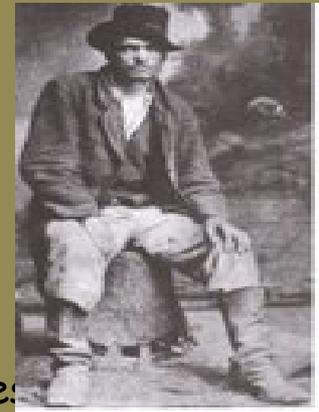


"One by one, they all fell out until I was the last one remaining, so determined was I that I should get a ride. After what seemed like the longest run I had ever made before or since, the driver called to me, "Hey sissy, would you like a ride?" I answered in my very best manner, "yes sir." At this he reached over, taking my hand, clucking to his horses to make me run, with legs that seemed to me could run no farther. On we went, to what to me seemed miles. What went through my head at that time was that he was the meanest man that ever lived or that I had ever heard of. Just at what seemed the breaking point, he stopped. Taking a blanket, he wrapped me up and lay me in the bottom of the wagon, warm and comfortable. Here I had time to change my mind, as I surely did."

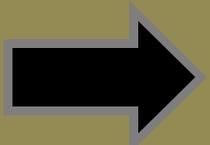


Brigham Henry Roberts

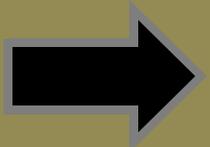
In 1866, "Harry" was only ten years old when he journeyed to the Valley without his parents.



"On one occasion, I and a boy about my own age had become interested in ripening yellow currants along one of the banks of the stream and lingered until the train had passed over a distant hill. Before we realized it, we were breaking camp regulations, but still we lingered to fill our hats with the luscious currants we had discovered. The caps at last filled, we started to catch the wagon train and were further behind it than we realized. Coming to the summit of a swale in which the wagon road passed, we saw to our horror three Indians on horseback just beginning to come up out of the swale and along the road. Our contact with the Indians around the Wyoming encampment had not been sufficient to do away with the fear in which the red men were held by us, and it could be well imagined that the hair on our heads raised as we saw an inevitable meeting with these savages. Nevertheless, we moved one to the right and the other to the left with the hope that we could go around these Indians, but nothing doing. "



"As soon as we separated to go around, the Indians also separated-the one to the right, the other to the left, and the third straight forward. There was trembling and fear that we were going to be captured. It was, therefore, with magnificent terror that we kept on slowly towards these Indians whose faces remained immobile and solemn with no indication of friendliness given out at all. I approached my savage, knowing not what to do, but as I reached about the head of the horse, I gave one wild yell, the Scotch cap full of currants was dropped, and I made a wild dash to get by-and did-whereupon there was a peal of laughter from the three Indians. They say Indians never laugh, but I learned differently. As the race for the train continued with an occasional glance over the shoulder to see what the Indians were doing, I saw they were bending double over their horses with their screams of laughter. The running continued until each of us had found his proper place beside the wagon to which he was assigned. The fright was thought of for several days, at least by strict adherence to camp rules about staying with your wagon."

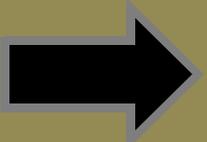


George Sudbury Humphreys

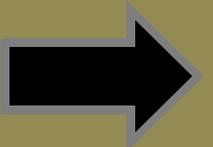
Pictured as the first man on the left with the mustache. George helped drive a team in 1861 at the age of nineteen



"I was talking to the assistant wagon master and driving the lead team, when we heard a terrible yell. We looked up the road and saw a large band of Indians coming towards us. They were very modest in their request, for they demanded 10 yoke of oxen, 1000 lbs. of flour, 300 lbs of sugar, 100 lbs of coffee, and 100 lbs of bacon. If we wouldn't give it to them, we would have to fight and they would take what they wanted. There were between three and four hundred Indians. Some of the men wanted to fight it out with them, but our wagon master, Mr. James Clayton, would not hear of that if there was any other way to get along with them. He told us to prepare for the worst, for we may have to fight, but he would do all he could to avoid it. After talking to them for some time, he thought of the man in our group with smallpox. He told the chief to go with him to the wagon where the sick man lay. A number of the Indians followed their chief, thinking they were going to get all they asked for."



"But when they got within twenty-five yards of the wagon, Mr. Clayton called to the sick man to look out of the wagon, for he wanted to see him. He arose and looked out. The scales were just falling off his face. The chief gave a look and said, "smallpox!". He turned his horse and yelled for his men to follow, and they did so. It was almost two miles to the Platte River, and they rode as fast as they could till they got there. Then they crossed and looked around for a few minutes, then rode off again. Mr. Clayton was watching them through a large glass. We could not get sight of an Indian for three weeks after that. We had to conclude that smallpox was a very good thing to have close by."

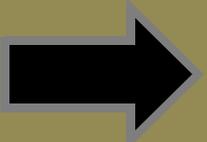


Peter Weston Maughan –
Told by his mother Mary Ann Weston Maughan

Peter was just three years old when he started the journey with his family. This is a story of an incident that occurred just outside of Nebraska. His mother Mary Ann tells the story as follows.



"About noon as we were traveling along on a good plain road, my little Peter, about three years old, was sitting in the front of the wagon between his brother Charles, and his sister Mary Ann. They were looking at a cow that had lost one horn. He leaned forward, lost his balance, and fell before the wheels. The first passed over him, and he tried to escape the other one. But alas, the wagon stopped just as the hind wheel stood on his dear little back. The brethren from behind ran up and lifted the wheel and took him from under it. He was bruised internally so that it was impossible for him to live long. The people left their wagons and gathered around mine, and all wept for the dear little boy that we knew must soon leave us....A few days after, we heard that his grave had not been touched, but another little one made beside it, and afterwards some more were buried by them. This was a great satisfaction to us to know that he remained as we left him."

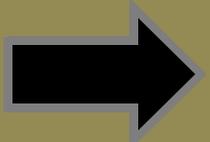


Margaret McNeil

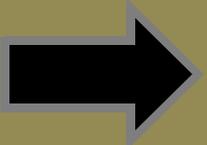
Margaret was thirteen when she crossed the plains in 1859. In the above photograph, Margaret Ballard is holding her twins.



The company had gone ahead, and my mother was anxious to have me go with them; so she strapped my little brother, James, on my back with a shawl. He was only four years old and was still quite sick with the measles. Mother had all she could do to care for the other children, so I hurried on and caught up with the company. I traveled with them all day, and that night a kind lady helped me take my brother off my back. I sat up and held him in my lap with a shawl wrapped around him, alone all night. We traveled this way for about a week, my brother and I not seeing our mother during this time. Soon our family was reunited and began our trek across the plains in 1859. While crossing the plains, my mother's health was very poor, so I tried to assist her as much as I could. Every morning I would rise early and get breakfast for the family and milk my cow so that I could hurry and drive her on ahead of the company. Then I would let her eat in all the grassy places until the company had passed on ahead, when I would hurry and catch up with them."

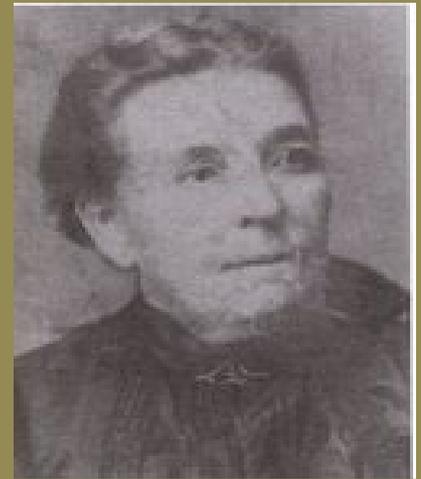


"The cow furnished us with milk, our chief source of food, and it was very important to see that she was fed as well as circumstances would permit. Had it not been for the milk, we would have starved. At the end of each day's journey I would milk her and help prepare our supper and then would be glad to go to sleep wherever my bed happened to be. Our food gave out, and we had nothing but milk and wild rose berries to eat. However, we had a good team and could travel fast. One night our cow ran away from camp, and I was sent to bring her back. I was not watching where I was going and was barefooted. All of a sudden I began to feel I was walking on something soft. I looked down to see what it could be, and to my horror found that I was standing in a bed of snakes, large ones and small ones. At the sight of them I became so weak I could scarcely move; all I could think of was to pray, and in some way I jumped out of them."

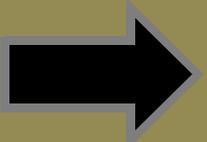


Fanny Fry

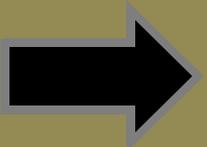
Fanny was sixteen when she left England without her mother in 1859.



"I could not describe my feelings while these preparations were going on. It seemed that I was in a complete daze or dream from which I expected to awaken and find it all a delusion. My feelings at this time can better be imagined than described. Mother had her photograph picture taken and gave one to each of us, and it was a prize to me, for it was five long years before I saw her again. We traveled three miles the first day. Brother Coltrin pulled the cart in my place, and I walked beside him. He felt so sorry for us because he knew what was before us and we knew nothing of it, he having just made the journey. At the Elkhorn River, my feet were so swollen I could not wear my shoes. Then when the swelling went out, my feet were so sore from the Alkali, that I never had on a pair of shoes after that for the entire Journey. I recollect one day the Captain put me to a cart with six people's luggage on and only three to pull it - A woman, a lad of 16, and I at 17 - and there was nine days bread."

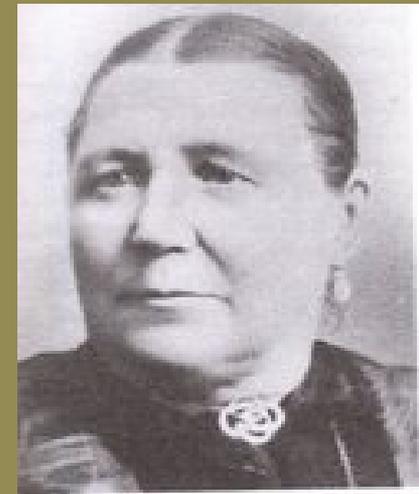


"All grown people were allowed 20 pounds of luggage a piece, and their cooking Utensils besides. That made quite a load for us. I know it was the hardest day's work I ever remember doing in all my life before or since. We had to pull up quite a long hill, and part of it was steep. In climbing we got behind one of the teams for the oxen to help us, for it was all we could do to keep it moving. Captain Rowley came up to us and called us lazy, and that I did not consider we were at all."

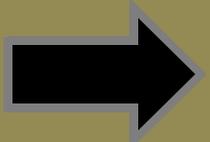


Mary Goble Pay

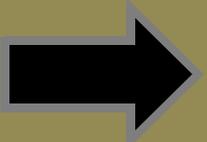
Thirteen year old Mary and her family were with the 1856 Hunt Wagon Company which accompanied the Martin Handcart Company.



"We had been without fresh water for several days, just drinking snow water. The Captain said there was a spring of fresh water just a few miles away. It was snowing hard, but my mother begged me to go and get her a drink. Another lady went with me. We were about halfway to the spring when we found an old man who had fallen in the snow. He was so stiff, we could not lift him, so the lady told me where to go, and I would go back for help, for we knew he would soon be frozen if we left him. When I had gone, I began to think of the Indians and began looking in all directions. I became confused, and forgot the way I should go. I waded around in the snow up to my knees and became lost. Later when I did not return to camp, the men started out after me. My feet and legs were frozen. They carried me to camp, and rubbed me with snow. They put my feet in a bucket of water. The pain was terrible. The frost came out of my legs and feet, but not out of my toes."



"...[when we arrived in Salt Lake] Brother Brigham and a Doctor Came. The Doctor's name was Williams. When Brigham Young came in, he shook hands with all of us. When he saw our condition - our feet frozen and our mother dead - tears rolled down his cheeks. The doctor wanted to cut my feet off at the ankle, but President Young said, "No, just cut off the toes, and I promise you that you won't have to cut them off any farther." The Doctor cut off my toes using a saw and a butcher knife."





Thank You for Coming

We hope that you were able to enjoy your visit at the Pioneer Children Experiences Museum, and that you now have a better idea of what Pioneers sacrificed so that you could live in such a wonderful place. They really had some tough times, but they knew that what they were walking for every step of the way would provide them with a better life and greater happiness. They also knew that this would offer their children happiness, their children's children, and so on and so forth all the way down to you!