

Autobiography of John V. Adams

Given for Cedar City Camp

Daughters of Utah Pioneers

I was born in Rounds, North Hampton Shire, England, August 27, 1831 where I resided with my parents, Thomas and Rebecca Adams and my brothers and sisters. Until my ears were saluted with the Gospel taught by the Latter-Day Saints. I did not then change my place of residence, but many of the ideas which I had previously entertained had changed vastly in regard to religion. For whereas I had believed that Prophets and Apostles and inspirations from the Almighty had ceased and that 1800 years had elapsed since the Lord had held any communication with the children of men. I afterwards became convinced that Prophets and Apostles whom the Lord had chosen were then living upon the earth. That is, after I had heard the Elders preach, and had carefully examined the evidence which they gave in confirmation of the principles which they preached. Hence I was baptized by Henry Beatty on the 25th of June, 1850. May 20, 1851, I was ordained a Priest in the Rounds Branch and continued with the same branch until February 9, 1853. At which time I left my native home and started for the Salt Lake Valley, I left England on the 15th of the same month, in the Ship Elvirah Owens, and safely arrived in New Orleans, after a pleasant voyage of six weeks and three days. Arriving at St. Louis on April 9, and left there on the 11th for the city of Keokuk at which place I arrived on the evening of the 12th. I waited for six or seven weeks. On May 10, I went with Richard Healy, Fairy Adams, and Dennis Win, to see the only beautiful city of Nauvoo, and after we had viewed the ruins of the great portion of the City and Temple, to our satisfaction. We then started from there up by side of the river to Fort Madison. But ere we arrive at Aperoosse, which is opposite to Fort Madison, divided only by the river, we were overtaken by darkness of the evening and we

traveler through swamps and brush for considerable length of time, 1850.
Not knowing whither we went, however at length we discovered a road
and traveled along it, which fortunately led to Aponeose, and we all
got lodging at a hotel and slept in (on) feather beds upon bedsteads being
the first time I had slept upon a bedstead since I left my native
home. For 11, after taking a good breakfast, we crossed the river from
Aponeose at Port Madison in a ferry boat. We then visited acquaint-
ances, James and Anthony Smith and their families and were kindly
entertained by them and after a short stay with them we turned down by
the side of the river to our camp, near Keokuk, where we arrived in
safety about twelve O'clock at night. After remaining near Keokuk a
few more days, we went to New Boston, and there camped for about two
weeks awaiting for the arrival of some cows. Here I saw my old friend
and companion, for the last time near New Boston, his last words to me
were: "Be as good as you can be, John, until we meet again." To which
I responded "Yes". When all things were prepared we started on our
journey, arriving at Kaisville on the 14th of July, crossing the Missouri
River on the 13th and 14th. Started from its banks to cross the plains
on the 15th of July.

August 2, we passed the Paunce Village and about five-hundred of
the Paunce Indians came and stood before our teams, which compelled us to
stop. They had with them their instruments of war, such as guns and
the battle axe, the knife, and the bow and arrow. They threatened to
molest us if we did not give them some of our provisions. So in order
to pass peacefully we collected a little from each person in our
company, and gave it to them. Through which we passed without being
molested. August 5, we passed Buffalo Creek, about three miles west
of which I beheld the grave of my friend, Richard Wesley, a brother of
which I had eaten, drunk, worked and slept, has sang and prayed
together. I gazed upon his grave with a pensible heart. Upon the

board of his grave was written; RICHARD HAELY, DIED JULY 23, 1853.

On the 8th and 9th of August, we killed two buffalos, one of which come into view in a singular way--we camped by the foot of a high cliff all of a sudden, a buffalo came running down the bluff at full speed, with a large wolf hanging to its tail. When the wolf and buffalo came near our camp, the wolf gave up the chase and retraced its steps back up the bluff, but the buffalo ran among our cattle and the men of our camp pursued it and killed it. During the night of the 9th, the wind blew and the rain descended and beat on our tent. Fairy Adams and myself were exposed to the storm, but we rolled up our bedding and threw them under the wagon. We got into the wagon ourselves and remained there until the rain stopped.

We traveled up by the side of the Platt River for about three hundred miles, two hundred of which, we had no timber with which to make fires, there was not any in that section of the country. Consequently we used Buffalo chips for fuel, they answered the purpose very well. After crossing up the Platt River for three hundred miles, we then crossed the north branch of it, which was one hundred and eight yards wide. Near the point of crossing. The north and south branches of the river unite and Fort Laramie is built near the junction of the two branches. Fort Laramie consists of the soldiers barracks and grocery store. It is five hundred and twenty two miles from Council Bluff City, and nine hundred from Salt Lake Valley. After traveling seven miles from the point of crossing the river we came to a very steep hill which we had to descend and in order to descend it with out impairing our wagons, we let them down with ropes. We then camped on the low land near the river. During the night the wolves howled dreadfully. The next eighty miles of our journey were very bad for traveling, being a succession of hills and valleys called the Black Hills. They were very difficult both to ascend and descend because they were so steep and rocky. When we had traveled over

the hills, we again came to the branch of the Snake River, and traveled up by its side for about nine miles, which brought us to Deer Creek. Deer Creek is a beautiful place for camping, a coal mine is near by.

We proceeded on having good road until we crossed the river, which is called the upper Platt Ford. After crossing the river we ascended a hill, which was three miles to summit and one mile down the other side. The descent of this hill was the roughest that I had ever seen traveled with team.

The roughness of the road and the many singular places through which we passed, caused me to think that the men who first traveled the road were very enterprising characters. We traveled on through rough and smooth until we arrived at Devil's Gate, which is a river running through a mountain four thousand feet high. I ascended a mountain a little to the west of Devil's Gate, which was still higher, on the summit of which was a pond of water. I took a view of the surrounding country, while I was up there I felt to exclaim, "America, Thou land of wonders, with lofty mountains extending as far as the eye can penetrate." I then descended and returned to camp considerably fatigued.

We traveled between mountains, through rivers and over rocky ridges and at length we came to the South Pass, which is the highest point of land in North America, it is called by some the dividing ridge, because the water east of it runs into the Atlantic Ocean and the streams west runs into the Pacific Ocean.

With tolerable good roads we came to Green River, we still had good roads till we were eleven miles west of Fort Bridger then we came to terrible roads, rough and ragged bluffs which we had to descend, being very dangerous. After descending this bludd, we had a few good miles of good road. Our next stop was a mountain 7 or 8 miles

on the other side and came into a narrow space between mountains and thus we traveled lofty mountains on each side, for a considerable distance. At length we came to Bear River. We had bad roads all the way to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, through Echo Canyon, when we got to the bottom of Emigration Canyon we then beheld to our great joy the Great Salt Lake City, the place of our destination. The beholding of which afforded us great joy and rejoicing. I arrived in Salt Lake City on the 10th of October, 1853.

I was called to go to Cedar City in 1857. In 1863 he was called to go to the Missouri River for immigrants, leaving Salt Lake in April and returning in October. He acted as Captain and Chaplain of the company of men going and was captain of fifty, returning. I brought back with me Brother Thomas and family consisting of wife and three children. Thomas was taken sick while crossing the plains and died and was buried in Found valley, thus leaving me to support and care for the family. I was mayor of Cedar City one term, was a member of the city council for several terms. Had charge of the donations of the ward for the upwards for twenty years. I was called to go with an exploring party into the Dixie Country. Years later the time of the Iron boom in Iron County I was called to go to Iron Springs to help form a settlement. I lived a straight and honorable life.

(Mary Ann Baily came to Utah with her parents and family in 1856 in the Ellsworth Handcart Company and assisted through privations hardships which never will be told, arriving in Salt Lake City to work at housekeeping for her support. She passed through all that the pioneers at that time had to meet such as being short of bread, wearing home spun clothes etc. She married John V. Adams in Salt Lake City April 9, 1857. She with her husband was called to settle in Cedar City at which she endured all the hardships incident to settling

a new country where all that the people had was either raised or made. She was the mother of eleven children, was loved by all of them. She lived a good honest life.) (Biography of my wife).

In the company that was called as teamsters from Cedar City in 1863 were John V. Adams, David Bulloch, John Hunter, Robert Heyborne and John Perry. Every town from here to Salt Lake City had to furnish man and provisions enough for the trip going and coming. Most of these provisions were left with responsible persons on the way, going, to be called for on their return. Each man was furnished with flour and a barrel of molasses and some bacon. Also they furnished with a yoke of oxen to each wagon. There were two men named Adams from Parowan, one of these was Bishop Adams. John V. Adams was made Captain and Chaplain of the company. When father left home he and his family of three children were all ill. He had a very bad throat which was so bad that the boys begged him to give up going, but he would go. This was a trip of experiences, one of the most exciting was when Bishop Adams' wagon of gunpowder and hardware was struck with lightning which set the wagon cover and the straw packing on fire. This was at Wood River. My father's brother Thomas Adams and wife with three small children were among the emigrants. Thomas took very sick and died. Think of the heartaches of my aunt, a stranger in a strange country and three small children, to lay her husband in a lonely grave and then go on and leave him. Years afterwards, polygamy being allowed, my father married my aunt Elizabeth. There were two children born to this union. Annie and Amy, both died in infancy. Elizabeth Adams died May 24, 1895, at the age of 64, respected by all who knew her.