

Company:

Daniel D. **McArthur** Company (1856)

Narrative:

Daniel D. McArthur, a returning missionary from Scotland, was appointed to lead the 2nd handcart company. Most of the people in this company crossed the Atlantic on the ships *Enoch Train* and *S. Curling*. They traveled from New York City to Iowa City, Iowa, and there spent about a month getting the handcarts and supplies ready to set out. On June 11, they moved out, two days after Ellsworth's 1st handcart company had left. The two leading handcart companies seemed to be engaged in a friendly rivalry trying to best each other in being the first to get to the Salt Lake Valley. McArthur's company earned the name of "Crack Company" because they were a spirited and fit group and were highly regarded by all who met them en route.

The handcarts were poorly built and required daily maintenance to keep them repaired. It was easy to be discouraged pushing handcarts laden with up to 250 pounds of luggage; a few turned back and dropped out. For much of the way across Iowa, McArthur kept pace with and traveled close to Ellsworth's company. On or about June 18 an attempted aggravated kidnapping of a teenage girl in the company by two men in a fancy buggy was thwarted. The sweltering heat persisted for weeks and several fainted from exhaustion, causing a few more to drop out.[Ellsworth Ancestors, p. 97] In early July a terrible thunderstorm tore up tents and drenched everyone. They were also delayed looking for people who veered off the road. At one point an 8-year-old boy got lost on the road. They halted for a day to search for him but then had to move on, leaving the boy's father to continue the search alone. Four days afterward, a reunited father and son joyfully rejoined the company, waving a red shawl as they approached the camp. Hot days continued; more people collapsed and more families dropped out. Along the way "gentiles" and "apostates" harassed Ellsworth and McArthur, calling them "tyrants" and "slave drivers." On July 8, both McArthur's and Ellsworth's companies arrived at and crossed the Missouri River on a steam-powered ferryboat and moved on to the emigrant camp west of Florence, Nebraska Territory.

At Florence, enticing land and farm opportunities were tempting, causing a few in the company to drop out. The company spent more than two weeks here repairing carts, restocking supplies, and getting ready to continue. Several days after Ellsworth's company left, McArthur's company left on July 24. They numbered about 220 people (mostly Scots, a few Germans, and 30 children). There were 44 handcarts, 2 wagons, 12 yoke of oxen, 5 beef cattle, and 12 cows. Each person was allotted 55 pounds of flour. The supplies included rice, 550 pounds of sugar, 400 pounds of dried apples, 125 pounds of tea, 200 pounds of salt, and 12 tents. The food was supposed to last them 60 days; then they would be re-supplied from Salt Lake City. They crossed the Elkhorn River on a poorly constructed

ferry and then had to travel 15 miles without water before reaching the north bend of the Platte River. Later they carried water with them over the dry stretches. At Loup Fork the women, children, and handcarts again used a ferry, but at least some of the men waded or swam across. Roads were often very sandy and in places cart wheels sunk up to their hubs. Many streams had to be forded. On August 3 rain fell in torrents all day and throughout the night. Weak from being on short rations, many suffered from severe fatigue. While traveling along the north side of the Platte, an elderly Scotswoman was bitten on the leg by a rattlesnake but survived (although at least seven Pioneers were bitten by rattlesnakes during the years of overland travel, none died). On that same day another old woman was run over by a fully loaded wagon; miraculously she suffered no broken bones. Two days before Chimney Rock, they were lashed by another drenching thunderstorm.

On August 28 they crossed the river to the south side and camped at Fort Laramie. Moving on, they skirted the Black Hills and followed the same course as the Ellsworth company just ahead of them. On September 2 they met the first supply wagons sent from Salt Lake. Two days later at Deer Creek (present-day Glenrock, Wyoming), they obtained more flour from five supply wagons. On that same day, 4 September they reached the Upper Crossing of the Platte, which they forded. The next day they stayed in camp because it had rained so much; snow covered the surrounding mountains. With plucky determination, they tried to keep up with or pass their friendly rivals in the Ellsworth company. Twice they covered more than 30 miles in a single day to catch up with Ellsworth. After traveling nearly night and day, on September 11 at almost 11:00 p.m. they pulled into camp beside Ellsworth's company on present-day Alkali Creek on the Seminoe Cutoff. This cutoff was an alternate route that tracked south of Rocky Ridge, bypassing it and four crossings of the Sweetwater. Ellsworth had taken this cutoff in 1854 when traveling to serve a mission in England. These two handcart companies were the first westbound Mormon emigrant groups to take the Seminoe Cutoff.

They pushed on over South Pass, forded Green River, and reached Fort Bridger on September 20. On September 25 they camped at the east base of Big Mountain. There, a number of friends from Salt Lake City met them, spent the night, and then took many of the women and children on into the valley by wagon. The men of the "Crack Company" now raced their carts to again try to catch up with Ellsworth. They came out of Emigration Canyon on September 26 to see Ellsworth's company feasting on melons with Brigham Young, who had come out to meet them with other dignitaries. After joining the party, both handcart groups paraded into the city in company with the First Presidency, the Nauvoo Brass Band, H. B. Clawson's company of lancers, and many local citizens. Ten had died in the McArthur Company during the journey.

The above narrative was taken from the following website on November 14, 2009:
<http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/narrative/0,18046,4981-1-195,00.html>