

## MRS. LUCINDA CLAWSON DODGE.

A Pioneer of '46! Such a person is Mrs. Lucinda Clawson Dodge, who resides at 1331 east, South Temple street. The astonishing discovery that to her belongs this remarkable distinction was not made until yesterday, and last evening the lady was interviewed by a NEWS representative who secured from her the photograph which accompanies this sketch. She preceded the advance guard who blazed the way into this mountain region in 1847 by one year. When this was learned, the surprise, not to say astonishment, was very great on the part of the commission officials.

Mrs. Dodge, who in 1846 was seventy years old and together with her father, mother and ten brothers and sisters preceded the ill-fated Donner party,

mission. Mrs. Dodge returned to Utah in 1849, in charge of her father and with other members of the family, who brought a barrel of gold dust along with them.

The story of the sufferings of the Donner party, as told by Mrs. Dodge, is a most pathetic one. When they were hemmed in by the snowy depths of the Sierras, her brothers went back with others to attempt the rescue of them. Some of the party they found alive, but a good many were dead. Those who were living were subsisting upon the flesh of those who had passed away. One of her own brothers perished in his attempt to save. The snow was so deep that it reached the top of the tall pines, and food had to be passed from branch to branch. The bodies of the living were carried out in a similar manner.

others, men, women and children. In company with others, they left Missouri late in April or early in May, 1846, separating west of South Pass on the stream known as Little Sandy. The Donner party in the latter part of July started out for Fort Bridger,

Mr. Rhodes was the original leader of the party but George Donner was elected captain of the company which was henceforth known as the Donner party. There they tarried four days prior to taking the Hastings "cut-off" to California. This route which was just begun to be travelled was by way of Bear river, Echo and Weber canyons, around the south shore of the Great Salt Lake and across the desert to the Humboldt and the Sierras. Its projector was Lansford W. Hastings, a mountaineer and guide. With the proprietors of Fort Bridger being interested in the new road, they were doing all in their power to induce emigration that way. Mr. Reed states that some friends of his who had preceded him to California with pack animals had left letters for him with Mr. Vaquez, Bridger's partner, who advising the company to go by the way of Fort Hall and by no means to take the Hastings "cut-off", but that Vaquez, as he learned later had kept these letters, thus preventing the party from being warned. Near the mouth of Echo canyon they found a letter sticking in the sage-brush. It proved to be from Hastings who was then piloting a company from Weber canyon. It stated that if the Donner party would send a messenger after him he would return and guide them along a better way than the Weber which was represented as being very difficult. Accordingly Mr. Reed and two others—Messrs. McCutchen and Stanton—followed and overtook Hastings near Black rock, at the south end of the lake. He could not then return but gave Mr. Reed some information concerning a "cut-off"—still another—from the mouth of Echo canyon across the mountains into the Salt Lake valley. The latter then returned to camp.

The route now taken by this party was the one followed next season by the Mormon Pioneers—up East canyon over the Big and Little mountains and down Emigration canyon into the valley. The way was extremely difficult and sixteen days were consumed by the Donner party in outting a road through the canyons. Then came the crossing of the western desert where many of their cattle gave out for want of grass and water while others were lost and stolen by the Indians, compelling them to abandon some of their wagons in the midst of the sandy waste. Delayed by these and other misfortunes the ill-fated company did not strike the main trail on the Humboldt until late in September. By that time the last companies of the season had passed. Another month brought them to the foot of the Truckee Pass of the Sierras. Early snows now came completely blocking up the way. Some of the company killed their cattle and went into winter quarters near Truckee Lake, but others hoping still to thread the pass delayed building their cabins until heavier snows fell, burying cattle, cabins and all. It was now December. Their provisions were well



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part of whom perished in the Sierra Nevada mountains in the winter of 1846-7, en route to California.

Mrs. Dodge's father was Thomas Rhodes, who left Ray county, Missouri, early in the spring of 1846. The journey across the continent to California occupied six months to the day. The Rhodes family settled in Sacramento, where Mrs. Dodge's mother died. Mr. Rhodes worked for a time in Sutter's mill, where gold was first discovered on the Pacific coast. Mrs. Dodge, who was still a child then, went to live with a married sister for a time. There she met John Clawson, who years after in Utah became her husband. The latter was a brother of General H. B. Clawson of this city, which fact makes Mrs. Clawson, now Mrs. Dodge, an aunt of Hon. S. Spencer Clawson, chairman of the Jubilee Com-

The Rhodes brothers succeeded in rescuing twenty-seven souls by carrying them out upon their backs. This, however, does not represent the total number saved, as forty-eight in all were relieved from their terrible sufferings, some of them by a party sent out from California.

Thomas Rhodes, Mrs. Dodge's father, died in Mineralville in southern Utah in 1867 at the age of 79 years. Mrs. Dodge has three brothers and our sisters who made the memorable trip with her, now living. They are, Isaac, William and Caleb Rhodes. The two former live in California. The latter resides at Price, Utah. He is three years older than herself and is in Salt Lake visiting the Jubilee.

The Donner party, says Whitney's history, consisted of George Donner, James F. Reed and about eighty-five