

awaiting our arrival, and who is proud of the principles of entertaining the servants of the Lord. Some of our warmest and best friends are a merchant, I. W. Nash and family, who make us eat a lunch every time we come in town; also J. S. Barret, Stewart and others who are like parents to the Elders.

I am now traveling with Elder H. A. Grover, who has been out from home twenty six months. We are both enjoying the best of health. We are now awaiting the arrival of the President of our Conference, Elder N. P. Nelson who succeeded our worthy Elder J. D. C. Young, recently returned to his mountain home.

CHAS. COLLETT
H. A. GROVER.

IA PIONEER'S EXPERIENCE.

The following is considered one of the most interesting letters received by the Jubilee commission:

Spencer Clawson, Chairman Semi-Centennial Commission:

Dear Sir—I was born in Irven, Ayrshire, Scotland, March 8, 1826, and was baptized May 8, 1842, in Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland, and received a knowledge of the divinity of the latter-day work, and an inborn desire to gather with the Saints. I started without purse or scrip and worked my way to Liverpool, England, where I met the first Apostle I had ever seen, Wilford Woodruff. Through his influence, I got the privilege to work my passage in the ship Windsor Castle, commanded by Captain Patterson. We sailed from Liverpool on the 3rd of October, 1845, and landed in New Orleans, America, on the 22nd of November. I was indeed a stranger in a strange land, but God was there, as He has ever been, my friend, for I have trusted in Him, and so far, have not been disappointed.

Through Captain Patterson, I received the measure, and started for St. Louis; on my arrival at the wharf, pondering in my mind what to do and where I should go, an old Mormon lady hailed me by name. It was dear old Mother McMaster—from my own native land, with whom I was well acquainted, she having been warned in a dream of my coming and was there to meet me and greet me. I felt at home among the Saints, but my great desire was to gather with the body of the Church, for that I had left home and friends and all that was dear to me, but I was compelled to remain in St. Louis, as the Saints were leaving Nauvoo and going west to find a home in the Rocky mountains. I found work in the coal mines near St. Louis; was doing well, but felt I was partaking of the spirit of the world and feared that I too might fall away as some had done.

In the spring of '47 it was reported that Brigham Young, with the counsel of the Twelve and others, were going to continue their journey west to find a resting place for the Saints. I longed to go with them and share their fate so I left my friends and clothing to come after. There being no convenience only by steamboat, and that only in high water, and when they could get cargo, so I started out on foot, and alone, and found the Saints in Winter Quarters, on the western

bank of the Missouri river. The Pioneers were busy preparing to start; some already moved camp as far west as the Elk Horn river. There again the hand of God was over me, and I found a brother and friend in Robert L. Campbell, who was living with Dr. Willard Richards, he introduced me to Joseph Young, president of the Seventies, who inquired all about me. On being told by Bro. Campbell that we were old friends, in the Oboron, and that I had come to stay with the Saints Brother Joseph said, "He is the man. I want to live in the family of Orson Pratt and help them, as the men folk are all gone. Sister Pratt's brother has gone east, and Orson is going with the Pioneers. Brother David can remain and help Sister Pratt, until her brother's return." I agreed to do so, and then and there Joseph ordained me to the office of a Seventy with Robert L. Campbell assisting. Said Brother Joseph, "Brother Stuart will have to take the lead in family prayers and labor in the ministry all his life." I was installed in the family of Brother Pratt and remained with them until June 22nd when I was called to drive team for Thomas Benbow, in Captain A. O. Smoot's company. G. B. Wallace's fifty and Samuel Turnbull's ten. Old Father Woodruff being in the same ten, and drove his own team all the way to Salt Lake Valley, he being the father of our beloved and honored President Wilford Woodruff. The order in which we crossed the Plains is now history; but there were many acts performed which have never been told, but which are praiseworthy and equal to anything that has been written in the history of the United States.

George W. Hill was hunter for our company, brave to a fault, as the following incident will illustrate, I being an eye witness: One day about noon, a grizzly bear and her cubs were discovered on an island on the Platte river by Captain A. O. Smoot. He stopped the company and detailed our hunter to kill the bear, the captain being mounted on his gray pony, armed for the fray. A number of the brethren followed on foot with their guns. As soon as they reached the island the bear came out of the brush with a growl. Away went the captain, horse and rider, John Gilpin like. Then away went the men on foot, in a general stampede like a flock of scared ducks into the river, leaving our hero, Brother Hill, alone to confront the bear. It was a sight to be admired and feared. He stood his ground, nerved for the fray, and one of life or death, for the combatants, the whole company looking upon the scene in breathless silence, Brother Hill, gun on shoulder? What if it should miss fire. His life depended on the shot. The bear came slowly on, as if on three legs, raising her front paws, at every bound, to strike the adversary down; when within about twenty paces of each other, crack went the gun. The maddened beast fell on her back, shot through the heart, but she jumped to her feet and in an instant ran back to the brush, as if to protect her cubs. There she was found dead. A cheer went up from the company while our brave hunter, stood quietly reloading his gun. The captain gave

orders to strike camp for the day, while men and dogs, hunted down the cubs, while others dressed the old bear and all rejoiced in a feast of fat things. There were many more acts of bravery and self-denial, too numerous to mention here. I leave them for more able writers.

We arrived in Salt Lake Valley on the 28th of September, 1847. I wintered in the Old Fort with Thomas Benbow and Wm. Carter. We fared with the rest on thistle roots and so forth, but felt happy in the hope of the good time coming. We are now about to celebrate at the Semi-Centennial a time I verily believed was coming but never expected to see it. In the spring of 1848 Uncle John Smith, the Patriarch of the Church, and President of the first Stake in the valley, called on me while at work sawing logs with the whip saw, and said he wanted me to take a mission back to Winter Quarters, with letters to President Brigham Young and the brethren, "for," said Uncle John, "they will be anxious to hear from us, and many others want to send letters to their friends, and this may be considered the first mail east from Great Salt Lake valley. Several of the Battalion boys are going back for their families, but the number is too small to make it safe, and as you are a young man you can go with them just as well as not."

I said, "Brother Smith, I am at your service, to go, or come, or stay just as the spirit prompts you." Said he, "Go, you shall be spared by the way and will not lose an animal." The company was organized as follows, William Garner, president; Robert Bliss, Abner Blackburn, Abner Kaulkens, Samuel Lewis, David M. Stuart. We started on the 6th day of March with twelve horses, six to ride and six to pack our bedding. Our provisions consisted of a little flour; we trusted to killing game for meat. By the way, the Indians took us at Aah Hollow and kept us in their camp two days, but finally let us go, after getting the most of our ammunition—we had but little for them to pilfer—and although they were on the war-path, the Lord softened their hearts, and they gave us a quantity of dried buffalo meat and let us go. In crossing the Loop Fork of the Platte we had to swim our horses. Brother Garner could not swim, he caught his horse by the tail and lost his gun in the operation, but saved his life. One old Spanish mare that wore the bell, got down on a sand bar and made no effort to get up. After making a fire and drying our clothes we determined to return with poles and help the mare up so as to fulfill Uncle John's prophecy, that we would not lose an animal. After laboring for a long time we lost hope for she would make no effort to help herself, so we concluded to drown her, by forcing her head under water there being about two feet and a half of water, where she lay. As soon as we had her head under water she made a struggle for dear life and rolled into the deep water and swam out to our great joy and to the fulfillment of Uncle John's prophecy. We had no other serious mishaps or slowness by the way, although we had to pass through snow, more or less, to where