

INCIDENT IN MY FATHER'S LIFE WHEN CROSSING THE PLAINS

As told by Olive Butler Smith May 1967 to EBW.

My father, John Lowe Butler 11, recalls this incident when crossing the plains. He was 8 years old when they left and 9 when they reached the Salt Lake Valley. He told it to me when I was in my teens.

The company of Pioneers stopped at a grove of sugar cane, to cook and make syrup, and then boiled it down to make cakes of sugar. While the men chopped the cane, the women boiled the syrup which had to be stirred constantly. Some were real anxious to work hard and obtain this valuable energy food while they had the chance. And again, there were some who were not as energetic as Grandma and her two sisters who were traveling with her family. Grandma did the cooking and stirring during the day. Her two sisters decided to stay up at night and make extra sugar, so they each took a turn during the night to keep the pot boiling. When they finished they put the sugar cakes they had made at night in a very deep wooden box. Grandma put hers in a different box.

When the men were making ready to get on their way, the Captain came around to collect the sugar that Grandma's family had cooked, to be divided with the company. After he received her sugar he asked for the sugar in the deep box. The two husky, well-matured sisters, quietly stood and shook their heads indicating no. The Captain went to the box and stooped over to reach into it to get the sugar. One of the sisters raised a big wooden paddle menacingly over his backside. He quickly raised up with a shout, but each time he stooped to get the sugar, the woman would raise the paddle, without saying a word, and each time he would raise up and shout at her.

It soon caused quite a gathering of curious saints to see what all the shouting was about. He then started shouting at Grandma to make them give up the sugar. She said, "I cannot-- it is their sugar. They made it at night, and no one else worked at night."

All of this created quite a lot of raaring and laughing in the crowd. Finally, someone told him that the two sisters were both deaf. They were very efficient at talking with their hands, but in this case the paddle seemed to work the best. After a lot of shouting and laughing, the Captain realized the sympathy of the crowd was with the sisters, and he left, leaving them with their sugar.

The pioneers moved on their weary way. Later on, when the company's supply of sugar was gone, Grandma, with the two sisters, took the extra sugar they had made at night and rationed it out to the children, the elderly and those that walked and were almost too weary to make it otherwise.

Father said that his Mother was a very good organizer. She was thrifty and so helpful to all those in need, and quite an inspiration to him and to those with whom she associated.