



## Face of Fillmore

*By Sherry Shepard*  
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This time of year, I always seem to get one song playing over and over in my head - "Pioneer children sang as they walked and walked and walked..." I am sure I not alone in this. We are reminded everywhere we go of our pioneer heritage. Parades, celebrations, television programs and much more give us a taste of how Utah began and a real feeling of pride and reverence for the forefathers of our area.

This year our daughter Becky and her husband Kent Kolb were among those who took part in a trek at Martin's Cove in early July. They were in awe of the experiences those pioneers had in the face of perilous circumstances. As the mother and



Becky and Kent (far right) and their "handcart family"

father of their handcart family, the first of a group of 26 handcarts in the Nelson Company, they trudged in the footsteps of those early pioneers and gained an appreciation for their hardships. Combined with the Wardle Company, there were over 300 from Tooele South Stake making the trip. Theirs was an opposite experience in one respect – the temperatures. While members of the original companies suffered and died from the extreme cold, these modern-day trekkers suffered from the heat. Becky said of their experience, "The overall trip was much more difficult than I had expected, yet it was a very spiritual experience learning firsthand of the trials these handcart pioneers survived. Each day as we packed up and moved on, I thought that we only did this three times, compared to the months the pioneers spent on the trail. We had the luxury of stopping



trekker's camp

where there were places to get water to drink, while the early people were not able to do this. These were a few of many comparisons I made. One of the most difficult parts, yet a highlight, was the women's pull up Rocky Ridge. I was so thankful we got to be part of this experience."

I remember our trip to Martin's Cove a few years ago. Ours was a different experience as we were put in a UTV and driven to the cove where we heard stories of the early people there and their suffering. My only fears along the way came from the fact that the lady missionary driver was unfamiliar with UTV's and nearly missed the bridge over the Sweetwater River. We got there about the same time as a group of trekkers who were fording the river. I was afraid I would be the next to get wet.



fording the Sweetwater River

At the visitors' center, we were shown a touching video about a man named Peter McBride and his family and their experiences. I couldn't help wonder if they were connected to the McBride family here in Fillmore. I know there are connections with the Martin and Willey Handcart Companies and Millard County.

One of those connections is Anson Call who was the leader of the original settlers who came to Fillmore in 1851. Brigham Young came to Fillmore as well, and before he left and returned to Salt Lake City, Brigham Young instructed Call to build the city as it had been outlined. Streets, houses, public buildings, and, most importantly, the territorial capitol had to be built. During the next year the Fillmore settlers worked to create a city out of a wasteland. The immediate need of building homes and public buildings took up most of the time and energy of the workmen. Because of this, construction of the capitol was delayed until the following spring. Among other assignments, Call helped colonize the city of Bountiful and the building of the Bountiful Tabernacle. He was responsible for raising the money in one year's time and to help push the project to completion. In addition, Anson Call assisted in the building of Parowan and Call's Fort, Utah.

Anson Call's connection to Martin's Cove involves the rescue of the stranded travelers. One of those was Emma Summers. Emma was born in Worcestershire, England and, as a young lady, was employed by a wealthy family as a house maid. By 1856, she had saved enough money to take her to America and the Salt Lake Valley. Her brothers, George and Edward Summers had already traveled there in the early 1850's. She arrived in New York City in June 1856 and joined the Willey Handcart Company. At this time, she was 28 years old. On July 9th, 1856, the Willey Handcart Company set off for the Salt Lake Valley. The first tragedy occurred two months later when hostile Indians attacked them and took all the beef cattle and cows which were the main source of food. It was impossible to replenish the stock, so the entire company was placed on

rations. On October 12, 1856, early snowstorms stalled the handcarts and made travel impossible. Their clothing and footwear were worn out. The Willey Handcart Company traveled as far as possible each day, pausing only to bury those who died of exhaustion and malnutrition. The snowstorms continued and the food diminished. On October 19, 1856, the last of the flour was eaten. More belated and farther back along the trail was the Martin Handcart Company, whose sufferings were more intense than the Willey Handcart Company. On October 3, 1856, Brigham Young called for volunteers to help the people in the Willey Handcart Company and the Martin Handcart Company. Anson Call furnished two wagons and teams and also most of the food provisions which were in them. He drove one team and George Summer (Emma's oldest brother) drove the other. The next day in Salt Lake, 27 men, 16 wagons loaded heavily with food and clothing, were assembled to assist the handcart companies. Anson Call and George Summers arrived first to the Willey Handcart Company where the people were starving. After reviving the Willey Company, a call was made for volunteers to proceed east to help the Martin Handcart Company. In response, Anson Call and George Summers joined others to go to their aid.

The Willey Handcart Company arrived into the Salt Lake Valley on November 9, 1856. Emma Summers was still wearing her bonnet which had been burned in places by the campfire to avoid freezing and her dress hung in shreds below her knees. She was taken to the home of her brother, George Summers in Bountiful, Utah. The following year, 1857, she and Anson Call were married.