

Mary Ann Stucki Reber Hafen 1854



by

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Mary Ann Stucki Reber Hafen

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Five million two-hundred eighty thousand steps is a lot for a six year old girl to walk in two months! My great, great, great grandmother, Mary Ann, did just that. Mary Ann was born in Switzerland and after her family joined the Mormon Church they crossed the Atlantic Ocean to come to America. During the trip there was a great wild storm. The ship was broken and the captain shouted, "We are lost." They prayed all night and were too scared to sleep. The sun came out the next morning and they were able to fix the ship.

They landed in New York City and rode a train to Nebraska. Mary Ann's father was a carpenter and helped make thirty-three handcars. Their family had one handcart. Two year old Rosie and six month old Christian got to ride. Her father and mother pulled the handcart and nine year old John pushed. Mary Ann, six years old, walked and walked and walked.

When they came to rivers or streams the men had to help the little children across. Some of the good things during the trip was they played and danced and sang. Someone was able to kill a buffalo and gave the family a piece of meat and they had cow to milk. They had many trials. There were mosquitoes, they came upon Indians, it rained often, and their food got low. Her mother's feet got swollen and they had to wrap her feet with cloth.

Mary Ann's family was sent to Southern Utah. Mary Ann started school when she was ten. She didn't have shoes till she was an older woman. She slept on a straw bed. One winter day there was heavy snow, and she had to go to school barefooted. Her feet got cold, and she got sick. Her back became sore and raw on the straw bed. She got the most comfortable thing in

her life. Someone gave her a soft pillow to lie on. She was better in three weeks.

Mary Ann was twelve years old when she got her first new dress. She loved it and always remembered that it was beautiful with yellow, red, and blue flowers. She picked cotton and learned how to weave cloth and make straw hats and made crocheted valentines, collars, and dollies.

Mary Ann got married to John Reber. Less than two weeks later he died in a wagon accident. Then she married again to John George Hafen. They had six children. She died when she was 91. She was buried in Bunkerville, Nevada.

Someday I will meet my great, great, great grandmother. I am going to throw my arms around her and tell her that I love her. She was a brave girl and a kind lady. She was a handcart pioneer and I am grateful that I am her granddaughter.



