

An incident in the life of Henry Rampton  
Related by him to his son Malcolm McDuff Rampton

As a young man Henry drove one of the wagons in a freight wagon train to Omaha to procure much needed supplies to bring back to the Saints.

On the return trip, Henry was driving a wagon bearing a coffin containing the body of a church man who had died en route to Salt Lake City.

As the wagon train neared the last range of mountains which must be crossed to enter the Salt Lake Valley it was necessary to double up some of the teams to make the final pull.

Henry's team was one of those used to double up. His wagon which also had a cow tied behind it was pulled out of the train and Henry was left behind to guard the wagon and the cow.

As night fell, Henry laid down on top of the coffin and went to sleep.

About two in the morning he was wakened by a shrill scream. Henry opened his eyes to see two bright eyes staring down into his own. He lay perfectly still but continued to stare into the pair of eyes which finally backed off as a huge mountain lion leaped from the seat of the wagon box and disappeared into the black of night.

Henry rose immediately to discover that the scream he had heard had come from the cow which lay helpless on the ground having been hamstrung by the cat.

It was necessary to kill the cow. Henry spent the rest of the night dressing out the meat. At daybreak, just as he had finished the job, a handcart company came staggering into view. They were in a pitiable condition having been without food for several days.

Without hesitation, Henry helped prepare the meat for them to eat, and it literally saved their lives.

Henry was relieved that it had not been his decision to kill the cow which had been left in his trust. He felt that that decision had been made for him to spare the lives of the handcart company.

(Submitted by Mildred Rampton Stewart)