

President Hinckley shared this account of the rescue:



"It was in ... desperate and terrible circumstances-hungry, exhausted, their clothes thin and ragged-that [the handcart companies] were found by the rescue party. As the rescuers appeared on the western horizon breaking a trail through the snow, they seemed as angels of mercy. And indeed they were. The beleaguered emigrants shouted for joy, some of them. Others, too weak to shout, simply wept and wept and wept.

"There was now food to eat and some warmer clothing. But the suffering was not over, nor would it ever end in mortality. Limbs had been frozen, and the gangrenous flesh sloughed off from the bones.

"The carts were abandoned, and the survivors were crowded into the wagons of the rescuers. The long rough journey of three hundred, four hundred, even five hundred miles between them and this valley was especially slow and tedious because of the storms. On November 30, 104 wagons, loaded with suffering human cargo, came into the Salt Lake Valley. Word of their expected arrival had preceded them. It was Sunday, and again the Saints were gathered in the Tabernacle. Brigham Young stood before the congregation and said:

"As soon as this meeting is dismissed I want the brethren and sisters to repair to their homes....

"The afternoon meeting will be omitted, for I wish the sisters to ... prepare to give those who have just arrived a mouthful of something to eat, and to wash them and nurse them....

"Some you will find with their feet frozen to their ankles; some are frozen to their knees and some have their hands frosted. .. ; we want you to receive them as your own children, and to have the same feeling for them' (Ensign, Nov. 1991, 54).