

Oil on Troubled Waters

Collection of Kate. B. Carter

(Taken from the history of Harriet written by herself in her eighty-first year, at Garden City, Utah, in 1925.

“After the death of my husband, William Randolph Teeples, in Pima, Arizona, I decided to return to my people In Utah. We had been sent to Arizona by Apostle Erastus Snow, to establish a Mormon settlement there. My husband had been appointed postmaster, he had worked at his trade of blacksmithing and building, and we had witnessed the growth of a nice little town. But I was lonely and homesick.

“My children were small, my only son being 13. There was no company of Saints going to Utah that Spring, but with the aid of a boy who wanted to earn his passage back to Utah by driving my team, we started out alone. The trip through Indian territory where we traveled much of the time at night so we wouldn't be seen by them, across high mountains and swift rivers, was perilous and long.

“As we neared the big Colorado River, we met people going south, who would tell us about the high water and say they were afraid we could not cross the big river this time of year, because the ferry could not be used while the river was so high. We could not turn back for we had not enough food to take us back to any settlement so we were obliged to travel on. The ferryman told us we were taking our lives in our own hands to attempt to cross any other way. But I was desperate, determined to go on, and depended upon the help of the Lord.

“In order to take the team across the river with the least trouble , the ferryman and the boy traveling with us, led the mules up into the mouth of the Canyon where the stream was not so wide. They tied the of the mules to the boat, climbed into the boat, my own boy in the center, and attempted to row across and make the mule swim.

But the river was so rough, with timbers pitching and tumbling, that it frightened the mule so badly that he snorted and floundered and pulled the boat downstream, even with the wagon, away out in the middle of the river. I was so frightened that it made me feel sick for a few minutes, and then I thought how the Lord had been merciful to us at other times during this dangerous journey, so I went out a little way from the wagon where I could not see the mule or the wildly dashing waves, and I knelt down and covered my head and prayed earnestly to the Lord to help us. I asked Him to allow us to reach our home in Utah and be permitted to carry on the work for our dead and perform what ever duties asked of us to do. When I arose and went back to the wagon, my son was on the other side of the river, holding the mule by the rope and swinging his hat to me! I could not begin to hear his exultant voice across the wide river. The two men had gone back up the stream to cross for the other animal, and I did not see them until they were coming back for us.

“The mighty river had calmed down until the floating timbers were gliding along without a splash or plunge. I had fixed some dinner on a folding table and when the men sat down to eat, the ferryman said, “Do you notice this river? Why, I have lived here for twenty years, and I have never seen it so smooth, when the water was high. It is as if oil had been poured on the water. I cannot account for it.” But I knew why it was so. It retained smooth until we had crossed over it nine more times, carrying pieces of our wagon across in the boat along with our other possessions. The ferryman said he wouldn't take another outfit across for any price, until high water time was over, for the river was rising two feet every 24 hours.

“As we traveled on toward our beloved Utah, I thanked God for his merciful deliverance and help.”

Eva, Teeples Olson, granddaughter