MY TRIP ACROSS THE PLAINS

MARGARETTA FABER MCCLINTOCK

Edited by CHARLES A. MCCLINTOCK*

The narrator of the following article was Mrs. Margarettta Faber McClintock, daughter of Franklin and Sarah Montgomery Faber, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Mr. Faber and his brothers—Edward and William—were machinists and engine builders, prominent in the business and social life of early Pittsburgh. He died in 1858 leaving four children: Margarettta who married John McClintock, Elizabeth who married Major George M. Downey, Henrietta who married J. Judson Brooks, and a son Frank, who remained unmarried.

John McClintock, son of Dr. Jonas R. McClintock, and descendant of a pioneer Pittsburgh family, served with distinction as an officer in the Civil War—following which he remained in the regular Army. About 1864 he married Margarettta Faber and to this union a baby, Margarettta, was born in 1865, the first of three daughters. This child is the infant, aged six months, referred to in the ensuing narration. She was called the daughter of the regiment and given the affectionate sobriquet of “Dottie.” In later life “Dottie” married Lieutenant Edward Heath Brooke of the United States Army and resided in Portland, Oregon. Today, hale and hearty at the age of 91, she resides with her daughter, Mrs. John M. Forbes and Mr. Forbes, in Santa Barbara, California.

In 1931 Mrs. McClintock, when in her eighty-third year, dictated this interesting story of a trip across the plains in 1865 from St. Louis to Salt Lake City, Utah, with the 18th Infantry, U. S. Army, a truly memorable experience for a young mother with an infant child. Of such fibre, pioneers were made!

Margarettta Faber McClintock takes up the story:

In February, 1865, we were stationed at Fort Trumble, Conn. (While there Aunt Lizzie visited us and became engaged to Uncle George.) From there we went to Richmond, Va. In September your father had a short leave and took me back to “Tip Top” to visit my mother. Aunt Lizzie was married that fall. He came back in November on leave arriving on the 22nd, the day before “Dotty” arrived.

* Mr. McClintock, a prominent banker of Pittsburgh, is president of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, and is a nephew of Major John McClintock, husband of the author.—Ed.
While home on leave he was transferred from the 14th U. S. Infantry to the 18th U. S. Infantry and ordered to join the 3rd Battalion at Jefferson Barracks (at St. Louis, Mo.). We were there about a month and in May the Battalion was ordered to join the Headquarters of the Regiment at Fort Kearney, Nebraska and commence our trip across the Plains, to re-garrison the Posts depleted during the Civil War. Fort Kearney was the rendezvous where the first expedition was organized for permanent occupation of Wyoming and Utah. The general plan was outlined by General Pope who had had great experience in Indian affairs. He had in view the exact relations of the new route to advance migration and the probability of a peaceful occupation.

In our Battalion Colonel Lewis was the Commanding Officer, Major Burt Adjutant and your father Quarter Master and Dr. Waters, Surgeon. These officers were all under thirty years of age and had served in the regular army during the Civil War. We went by boat up the Missouri River to St. Jo. From there the troops marched to Fort Kearney where we joined Headquarters of the 18th. Colonel Carrington was in command of the Regiment. One Battalion at that time numbered about 600 men, 226 mule teams, besides hospital ambulances, also ambulances for the ladies and children, a very large command preparing for a long march across the Plains; Colonel Carrington with his Headquarters, (Reg. band, etc.) and the 2nd Battalion to go from Sedgwick to the new Fort Reno and our Battalion to Fort Douglas, Utah. Jim Bridger was the chief scout. We arrived at Fort Kearney the 13th of May 1866 and on the 19th the Command was ready and the march began along the Platte River.

Our carriage was very comfortable, built so that two seats in the back could be made into a bed for the baby and me. It was enclosed with curtains. The baby was six months old when we started. She was a great favorite with the officers, who called her the "Daughter of the Regiment," which was shortened to "Dottie," and clung to her all her life. I brought a nurse with me from Pittsburgh. She was of little use to me, fell in love with a soldier and married him. We left them at one of the Posts.

We camped every night. At Reveille, our tents were "struck," sometimes over our heads while eating our breakfast. Then the troops marched until noon when the tents were "pitched" and ready for us when we drove up. We (your father and I) had three tents, two wall tents with fly between; one was the dining room, the other the bedroom;
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pital tents, camp stools and chairs from the baggage wagons and the Fort and a fine concert was given. The Regimental band's string orchestra doing their part, fifteen or twenty sergeants and soldiers with blackened faces formed a wonderful chorus.

Part of the command left us here but we marched on two days more with Colonel Carrington which brought us to Louis's Ranche at the upper crossing of Lodge Pole Creek. The first day's march was 17 miles to Lodge Pole Creek and the second 18 miles to Louis's ranch. Here we all had another gay evening with the 2nd Battalion and separated from them, Colonel Carrington and his command going north through hostile country to establish the new post at Fort Reno. Our Battalion under command of Colonel Lewis, to Camp Douglas by way of Lodge Pole Canyon through a country of wonderful mountains and canyons and beautiful wild flowers. Mrs. Burt and her sister, Miss Reynolds, were with us. After leaving Sedgwick we saw a great many Indians. The Utes were always friendly. One day an old Indian came in with some blankets he wanted to swap for the baby. Major Burt showed him his little boy and said, "But this is a brave; that baby is a squaw." But the Indian insisted that he wanted the white baby.

One day one of the soldiers brought in a little fawn whose mother had been killed. I had it for some time and fed it from a bottle. We had a cow of our own. The little thing died during an exciting experience we had in attempting to cross a very swift river. The troops and all the wagons, provisions, etc., had crossed on a ferry which ran across this river to a Fort. Mrs. Burt and her family, and baby and I were to be the last taken over, when the ferry broke loose and floated off down the river. The water was too swift and far too cold for the soldiers to do anything about it. So we were marooned on our side of the river, our husbands and all the food on the other side. We had to wait for some Indians to be procured to capture the ferry and bring it back. As we waited a band of Indians appeared in their war paint, on their way to fight another tribe. At first of course we were frightened, but they went on their way without molesting us. They were very picturesque. Before night we were ferried across in safety. We were in no real danger, for of course we must have had some soldiers on our side. Our "strikers" surely must have been left with us.

At each post where we stopped we camped just outside the Post, and we were always delightfully entertained by the officers stationed there. There was always good music. The orchestra made up of soldiers
from the different companies. So we had "hops" as they were called in the Army, and often theatricals given by the officers and wives. Giving amateur plays was one of the recreations in those old Army days. And the plays were usually well done and well put on. The officers or any soldier with talent painting the scenery.

While stopping at one of the Posts a little darkey appeared at my tent. He said the Wagon had sent him. I asked him if he wanted to go with us and what he wanted to do. He said he wanted to travel and that he had often "toted" babies. So we took him along with us. I found him a great help, having left the nurse at one of the Posts. He was about fourteen years old and very ambitious to learn to read. So I tried to teach him. He was very scornful at the beginning, insisting that anyone would know C*A*T spelled cat. We took him with us to Camp Douglas. I do not remember what became of him after that.

We camped one night on our way to Fort Bridger at Echo Canyon, a wonderful canyon through the mountains, weird and magnificent. The mountains high above us on both sides of a rushing river. We were really in the heart of the Rockies. When the bugle sounded there was not only one echo but two. (The buglers were expected to practice the calls. They would have enjoyed practicing here all night.)

There was a small settlement at the entrance of this Canyon where we had a real feast of ham and eggs and fresh vegetables which is also a pleasant memory.

Fort Bridger was situated in a beautiful valley at the foot of the Uinta Mts. (The Post was abandoned in 1890.) A fascinating creek wound its way through the center of the Post. The officers' log quarters on one side of the creek, the Parade ground and soldiers' quarters on the other.

Judge Carter, a charming gentleman from Virginia, was the Post-Trader. He and his family lived in a very attractive house. It seemed wonderful to find a real home so many miles from civilization. The Trader's store was directly back of their house, facing the road we had come over. One of the excitements of the day was to go to this store when the mail arrived.

We camped outside of the Post and were delightfully entertained by Mrs. Carter. We were there three days and Mrs. Carter and I became great friends. I had the pleasure of visiting her several times while we were stationed at Camp Douglas. The wild flowers at Bridger were very beautiful, the streams full of brook trout and there was good
hunting on the mesas (table lands). The famous bad lands were only a short distance from the Post, where many interesting fossils were to be found.

We parted here from Major and Mrs. Burt and Dr. Waters. We were very sorry to leave them and that beautiful country. Many years later, in 1895, I was again at Fort Bridger with my daughters Sallie and Gertrude, visiting Dottie whose husband was stationed there. And I renewed my friendship with Mrs. Carter. Judge Carter was not living then.

From Bridger we made forced marches, reaching Parley's Canyon in three days. Our tents were pitched over beautiful wild flowers and the canyon was full of birds. This camp is one of my most delightful memories. It was the last before reaching Salt Lake City. We all regretted breaking camp the next morning, but at the sound of the bugle we had to obey. My carriage was the first to reach a plateau out of the Canyon overlooking the Valley. Salt Lake City miles below us, the Great Salt Lake visible in the far distance, and to the right above the city at the foot of the mountains stood Fort Douglas with our flag flying. Our future home! As the soldiers reached the plateau and were halted there was perfect silence, everyone being impressed by the beauty of it all. This was the Fourth of July. The soldiers had marched from St. Jo. Missouri all the way, from the early part of May to July the 4th. Gen. Gibbon followed this same route at the beginning of the Civil War, taking troops, artillery, cavalry and infantry back east to instruct the Volunteers. Now we were bringing the troops back to protect the country from the Indians, to make it safe for emigration.

In September 1857 Colonel S. Johnson, U.S.A., took up winter quarters near Fort Bridger on his way to Salt Lake. In 1858 he camped 40 miles from Salt Lake City and remained there until withdrawn in 1860. My uncle, Colonel Sam Montgomery, was with this Command. The troops were not returned to Salt Lake until the end of the Civil War, and were then stationed at Fort Douglas with the guns trained on the Temple. At that time the Gentiles were being murdered by Brigham Young's "Avenging Angels."

A young doctor, a Gentile, was called from his house to see a sick man, and as he turned a corner from his home he was shot and killed. It was after this the guns were turned upon the city—and there were no more Gentiles murdered.

Before reaching Salt Lake I saw the only mirage I have ever seen.
It was such a beautiful sight, so unreal, I felt as though I were dreaming.

When the bugle sounded Assembly we started for Camp Douglas which was only five miles away. A short distance from the Camp we were met by some officers from the Post who invited us to have luncheon with them. They expected to find me tired but I was attired in a black silk dress that I must have unpacked for the occasion.

The baby, having lived so long in tents, was terrified when we took her inside the four walls of a house.

Colonel Lewis being in command was assigned the Commanding Officer's quarters which he turned over to us, I being the only lady in the command. It was a large house and at first we had very little furniture, but in time we accumulated enough to make it very comfortable and cozy.

Camp Douglas is situated three miles from Salt Lake City and very soon I made some delightful friends there, among the Gentiles; Mrs. Jenks, whose husband had a bank; Mrs. Hussey and Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Foote, our rector's wife, and others.

Near our quarters, separating us from the other quarters of the Post, was a little bridge across quite a swift deep stream. One day my little girl and her three dogs, who never left her, wandered off and we found them on this bridge, Dottie lying down looking into the water, the dogs beside her, a pointer, a setter, and a wee terrier.

When we arrived at Camp Douglas, Salt Lake City was a beautiful little place nestled in the valley with mountains completely surrounding it. The streets very wide with asakies of rippling water on both sides of them, brought down from the mountains for irrigation. There was in existence at that time the Deseret Bank, a theatre where Maude Adams' mother played in a stock company, Brigham Young's houses, the Beehive and the Lion House. Also the Tabernacle, and the beautiful unfinished Temple, the cornerstone of which was laid in 1853. It took exactly forty years to complete it. It was on this Temple that the guns of Fort Douglas were trained.

The theatre was built in 1862 and was the largest theatre west of Chicago. I have seen Brigham Young with his favorite wife "Amelia" in his box at the theatre. And in seats reserved for them in the "Pit" his many wives and their families. He had during his life twenty-seven wives and fifty-six children (twenty-five sons and thirty-one daughters).

The only time I remember meeting Brigham Young was at a Military Ball given for his own militia to which we were all invited. It was
given in the Social Hall, built by Brigham Young for the amusement of the women. He believed dancing to be good for the body and soul but permitted only "square" dances.

Several churches of different denominations had failed to establish themselves in Salt Lake. When we arrived our Church was the only one in existence. Mr. Foote was the rector, Mr. Haskins his assistant. Bishop Tuttle was the bishop of the diocese.

My little girl and Mrs. Hussey's baby, with several "grown-ups" were the first people baptized by Bishop Tuttle in Salt Lake City.

The Mormon Church with Brigham Young at the head of it, ruled the country. It was very difficult for the Gentiles to accomplish anything at that time. There were some English people living there who belonged to our little church.

After three years I went back to the States to visit my mother. We travelled by stage to Cheyenne where we took the train. The railroad being finished to that point. I was alone in the stage with my little girl and nurse. We travelled day and night and it was a very uncomfortable trip. As we drew near a Stage Station our coach, for some reason, upset, turned on its side. No one was hurt for the horses were stopped at once. The driver and men from the station were very apologetic as they had no lights and it was a very dark night, but the station had been attacked the night before by a small band of Indians. We waited there for daylight before going on. We were well taken care of for there is no better protection than the men of the frontier in those early days. They had the greatest respect for a lady. We reached Cheyenne safely and took the train for civilization, and so ended my trip across the Plains, and three of the happiest years of my life.