

Handcarts and Indians

By Janet S. Porter

Stoddard Family Record, by Oscar Orlondo Stoddard, FamilyLegacy.org

CHARACTERS (5-9 Characters)

Oscar (age 40)

Company Ldr.

President George Q. Cannon

Brother Christensen

Danish saints (1-4)

Narrator

(Use a wheelbarrow or box for the handcart and a table for the tent.)

Narrator: Oscar Orlondo Stoddard was born 30 December 1821 in Onondaga County, New York. His parents were Oren and Nancy Matilda (Cook) Stoddard. Nancy died before coming with the Saints, but Oren settled in Salt Lake City, Utah. Nancy was third cousin to Phineas Wolcott Cook, linking back to Joseph and Abigail (Johnson) Cook, but it isn't likely they ever knew each other.

Oscar and Nancy were faithful members of the LDS Church. He was called on a mission in 1858 and returned in time to help with immigration to Utah in 1860. He was a captain of the last official handcart company in which 126 people came into the valley on 24 September 1860. President George Q. Cannon met the company and spoke to them:

Pres. Cannon: This is the Fourth of July, 1860. You people have worked hard to be ready to walk to Zion.

Company Ldr: We have 126 people in this company, 7 wagons and 21 handcarts.

Pres. Cannon: We have asked Brother Oscar Orlondo Stoddard who is returning from a mission to be emigration agent for these companies. He has made all the arrangements for us to leave today.

Oscar: We have with us Scandinavian brothers and sisters. And here we have families from Switzerland. None of them speak English, so we'll all do our best to help them understand what we need.

Company Ldr: Before we leave, President Cannon, do you have a blessing for us?

Pres. Cannon: I do. I feel to bless this company that you will arrive safely in Zion without loss of a single life.

Oscar: We'll have a prayer and then roll. To Zion!

(Everyone leaves. Oscar and Brother Christensen return)

Oscar: Brother Christensen, are you beginning to understand English?

Br Chr: (Broken English) A little. Every day better.

Oscar: Is there anything we can help you with?

Br Chr: We hear...Indians. Where are Indians?

Oscar: They live in the hills far away. We're not going to worry about them.

Br. Chr: Come here?

Oscar: No, we don't think so. And if they do, we have guns to scare them away.

Br. Chr: Good, now maybe sleep.

Oscar: Good night.

(Brother Christensen goes into his tent, a sheet or blanket over a table.)

(Oscar and Brother Christensen return)

Oscar: Here we are at Independence Rock. That means we're almost half way there.

Br. Chr: Still no Indians?

Oscar: There are Indians all around us. They live here, but they won't hurt us.

Br. Chr: Afraid of Indians.

Oscar: Don't worry. We have guns if there is trouble.

(Brother Christensen and others go into the tent)

Narrator: That night a group of pioneers from the Salt Lake Valley camped nearby, and some of the brethren came late into camp after most of the travelers were asleep. They greeted friends and told events from the valley. A great spirit of fellowship came upon them, and they began shooting their guns as a loud hurrah.

(Make the sound of guns by clapping hands or by pounding a book flat on the table)

(Those in the tent can stand or use a mike to speak, so everyone can hear.)

Br. Chr: *(Puts his head out of the tent)* Guns. I hear guns. Indians

Danish saints: Indians, Indians! Get out of the tent!

They will kill us!
Help! Get out of the tent!

Br. Chr: You're walking on me!

Danish saints: Run, get out of the tent!

Indians!

(Brother Christensen limps to Oscar)

Br. Chr: Oh, I've been hurt.

Oscar: What happened?

Br. Chr: Indians. Everyone stepped on me running out of tent. My arm out of joint.

Oscar: Oh...I see. Your shoulder has come out of the socket. Did that happen while everyone was running out of the tent because they thought there were Indians?

Br. Chr: Yes, stepped on me in the dark.

Oscar: Have you tried having someone pull it back into the joint.

Br. Chr: Not again! Already tried. Too much pain.

Oscar: I'll tell you what. I'll give you a priesthood blessing. In the morning you'll be fine. Is that what you want?

Br. Chr: Yes, thank you.

(Oscar and Brother Christensen leave the stage)

Narrator: Brother Christensen woke up the next morning pain free. His arm was fine, and he arrived at the valley ready to get a farm in Southern Utah and go to work. Oscar Stoddard moved to Morgan County, Utah, and was called as Second Counselor in the West Porterville Ward. He died 9 September 1896 at Porterville & is buried there.