



*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints (Psalm 116:15).*

*By Sheila Kindred (Two true stories)*

# Laying the

Look at those clouds,” Mom said as she looked out the car window. “I hope that it doesn’t rain.”

“Look at those hills,” Dad said cheerfully. “They mean we are almost to the Missouri River.”

I sighed. We had been riding in the car for over two hours on our way to Omaha, Nebraska, from our home in the center of Iowa. My brother and I were crowded between packs of clothing and the food we were taking for our two-day stay. We were going to the cornerstone-laying and dedication of the Winter Quarters Temple. I could hardly wait to get my first glimpse of our new temple and to see our prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley.

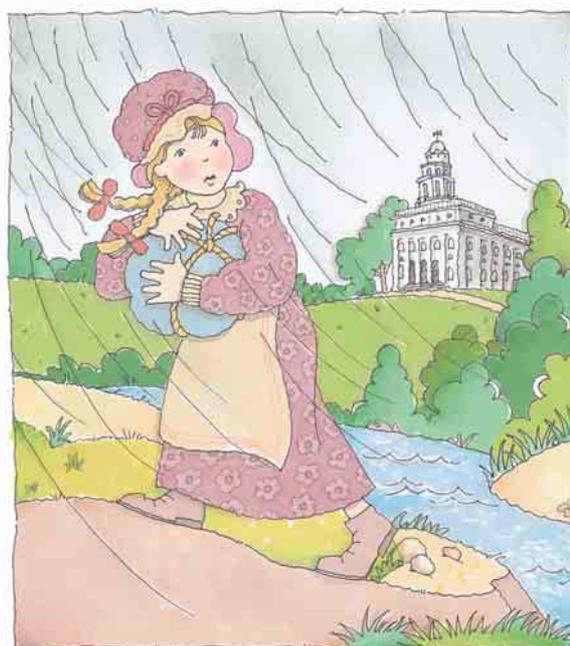
I thought about my ancestor, Sarah Anne Nixon, who was just about my age when she crossed Iowa on her way to Winter Quarters 155 years ago. What was it like for her?

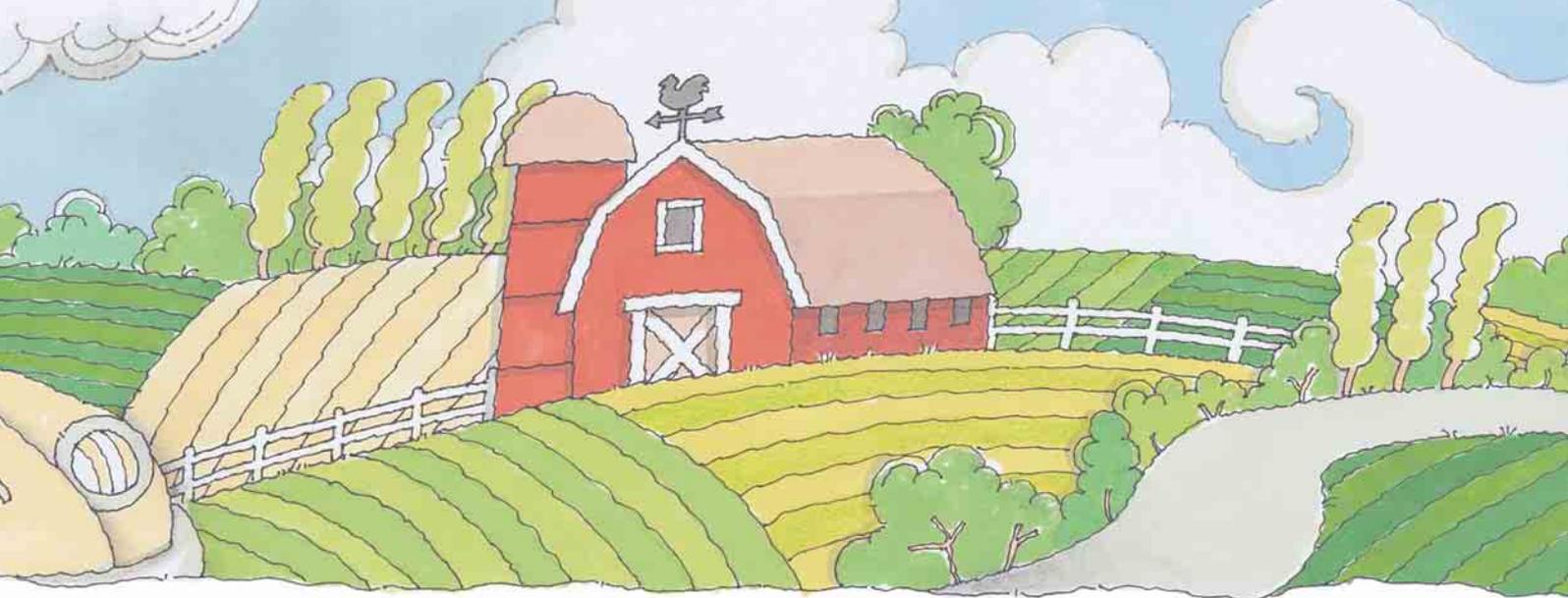


*September 23, 1846—on the western bank of the Mississippi River*

*Tremendous thundershower today. The rain came down in torrents, drenching everything. We have only a tent to shelter us. We left Nauvoo in haste a few days ago. Our carefully packed belongings were scattered by the mobs looking for*

*firearms. We have little left. It was not hard to leave the deserted city, but it breaks my heart to see our beloved temple just across the river—so near, yet unreachable. Papa is still grieving. As Brother Joseph’s bodyguard, he feels he should have somehow prevented the martyrdom. If he would just make music again on his life, I am sure my heart would not be so heavy.*





# Cornerstone



“May I eat some of the crackers and cheese?” my brother asked. “I’m starving.”

“We’re almost there,” Dad assured him. “We’ll have a big lunch soon.”

We had been in the Chicago Illinois Temple district, and it took all day to drive there. I am glad we don’t have as far to go now. We had been praying for a new temple closer to us, and the Lord heard our prayers.



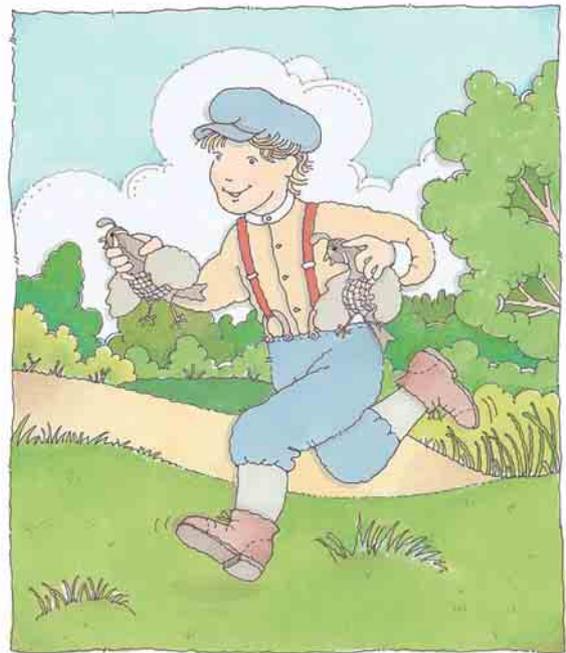
October 9, 1846—Sugar Creek

*A miracle in camp today. We have been living on parched and boiled corn, and drinking muddy river water. Many are ill and all are hungry, but today, flocks of quail suddenly flew into camp, falling on wagons and tables. My brothers were able to catch many in their hands! We had a feast. God has not forgotten us. Our rescuers taught us a new song written by Brother Clayton. The song reflects well how I feel today: “All is well!”*



Mom started humming a hymn in the front seat of the car. I recognized the tune. It was “Now Let Us Rejoice.”

“Is that one of the hymns you memorized?” I asked her. She was singing in the choir at the



cornerstone-laying ceremony. I knew she had to rely on her memory because the choir would not be using books.

“Yes. Memorizing the hymns wasn’t easy, but it has become a real blessing to me. It made me think more about the meanings of the words. I realized that these songs are about the promises given in the temple. So I am singing about my fondest hopes and dreams.”

I could see tears in the corner of her eye, and I felt my own heart grow warm. When I turned to look out the window, I saw a sign that said “Mormon Bridge.” We were nearly there.



*November 15, 1846—Mama died today.*

*We buried her beside the trail on the plains of Iowa. We were unable to stop in Mt. Pisgah because they had no room, so our rescue company pressed on toward Winter Quarters. Now I must be mother to Thomas, Harriet, Margaret, and baby Rose. My oldest brother, John, says that we must not lose faith. Papa and Mama were sealed together in the Nauvoo Temple. This thought alone seems to comfort Papa. It comforts me as well.*



While waiting for the ceremony, we visited the pioneer cemetery on the temple grounds. We read the names of hundreds of people who died here so long ago. But it is not really a sad place—it is a reverent place, like inside a church. We spoke softly about these pioneers and about what they endured for their beliefs. Because of them, we, their descendants, are now able to build temples and worship God freely. I am grateful.



*December 1846—Winter Quarters*

*We have settled as best we can into a log hut. It is a rude dwelling, but we are better off than*

*most. This is not our final home, but for now we are grateful for time to gather again as Saints. I wish Mama was here, but I feel she is watching over us. When the spring comes, I will finish the journey that my mother began, for her dream has now become my own.*



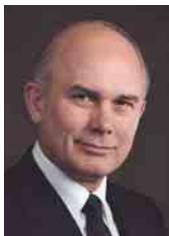
The rain stopped while the choir sang, and we were able to put down our umbrellas. During the ceremony, I looked up at the windows in the temple. In the stained glass are pictures of rivers, trees, pioneers, and Native Americans. Looking at these windows is almost like looking at a beautiful vision of the past.

I saw the prophet today. He cried when he talked about the pioneers and the sacrifices they made in Nauvoo, in Iowa, and here in Winter Quarters. He said that he

felt that they were here in spirit, watching us this day. Then he invited all the children to come up and put some cement onto the cornerstone after he was done. But I was content to watch. My heart was full.

I am glad I was here today. I feel happy inside. I believe that whatever happens to me in my life, I can be strong and faithful like the pioneers, just as long as I remember this place and this day.

(Note: Sarah Anne Nixon's story is from the author's family's journals.)



**“In a message about the pioneers who crossed the plains over a century ago, President J. Reuben Clark spoke words that apply to pioneers in every age. . . .**

**“ ‘They were pioneers in word and thought and act and faith. . . . God keep their memories ever fresh among us . . . to help us meet our duties even as they met theirs.’ ”**

**Elder Dallin H. Oaks  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
(Ensign, November 1989, page 64.)**