

Be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto [the prophet] (Doctrine and Covenants 28:3).

The October dawn was frosty as I helped load our belongings into the covered wagon. The weight I carried in my ten-year-old heart was heavier than the bundles of clothes and food under which I struggled. *It just isn't fair*, I thought. *I don't want to leave our home and my friends and travel three hundred miles to an unknown place.*

It was 1877, and our home near St. George, Utah Territory, was already one of the farthest away from Salt Lake City.

My mother called. "Mary Agnes, please make sure everything is cleared from the back porch before we leave."

As I made my way around the house, I thought back to the day six months ago when my father had returned from the dedication of the St. George Temple.

To the LAST FRONTIER

A TRUE STORY

By Sheryl Zimmerman

Mother and I had stayed home because my baby brother was very ill. One look at Father told me that something serious had happened.

Mother spoke first. "William, what is the matter?"

My strong father took her in his arms with tears streaming down his face. "We must leave our beautiful home." He could say no more.

Leave? How could we leave? After years of saving and doing without, we had finally been able to buy 260 acres of farmland and build a comfortable brick home where the ten of us could live. We had many horses, cattle, and other farm animals. We lived near my grandmother and my cousins. I was able to attend the school in town. Who would ask us to sacrifice all this?

Later, I heard my parents discussing what was happening. Families were needed to extend Church settlements and influence farther south.



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Brigham Young had called my father to move with his family. He counseled my father to sell all that we had so that we would not be tempted to return to Utah. We were needed in Arizona.

Arizona. A place where there was very little water. Where there were great distances with nothing to see. Men had been called there by the prophet last year. Many had returned to Utah because they could not endure the hardships. Father said no greater sacrifice could be asked of him.

Mother's voice brought me back to the present. "It is hard to leave, is it not, Mary Agnes? Do you know the real reason we are moving?"

I shook my head.

"We are going to Arizona because the prophet gave that call to us. Remember what I told you about when I was your age and my family lived in Nauvoo? After the Prophet Joseph Smith was killed, there were contentions with nonmember neighbors. The Brethren told us to leave our homes and move west. There our lives would be spared, and we could worship as we pleased in peace.

"Terrible as it was to leave our home, there was nothing else to do unless we turned away from God, the Brethren, and the Church. We made the long, hard journey to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. We sacrificed again when we followed President Young's direction to leave there and settle here.

"Now we have been asked to go to Arizona. We do not *have* to go to the unsettled desert. No one is forcing us. We are not fleeing for our lives. We could make excuses to not go. This time the struggle to obey comes from within."

Mother hugged me to her as she continued. "In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord said that when we receive a commandment 'whether by

mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.'*

"Our prophet has spoken to us. I know he speaks for God. Your father and I decided long ago that we would follow the counsel of the prophet, no matter what the sacrifice."

The Spirit warmed me as I listened to Mother's testimony. I gained strength to face the uncertainties ahead.



As I climbed in the loaded wagon, I took one last look at our home, then turned to face the trail to Arizona. I realized that I, too, had a testimony of God's representative on earth. Like my parents, I would follow the prophet, even to the last frontier.

***Doctrine and Covenants 1:38.**



We have been promised that the President of the Church, as the revelator for the Church, will receive guidance for all of us. Our safety lies in paying heed to that which he says and following his counsel.

President James E. Faust
(*Ensign*, August 1996, page 6).