

Part 2

Not Even Halfway

By Geraldine T. Fielding

(Based on a true story)

Henry was 11 in 1883 when his parents decided to leave England to join other members of the Church in Utah. They didn't have enough money for the whole family to go at the same time, so they decided to send Henry first. It was a difficult decision for Henry, but he chose to be brave and board a ship that would take him all the way to America.

Henry's trip across the ocean was long and lonely. During the day he liked to stand at the rail and look out across the ocean. He couldn't see anything in either direction. *How did the captain know where America was?* Henry wondered. *Would they ever get there?*

At last, several weeks after they left England, a sailor called, "Land ho!" Henry raced to the railing with the other passengers. Far on the horizon he could see a small strip of land. America! Even though New York was just the first stop on his long trip to Salt Lake, excitement swelled in Henry. He was on his way to Utah!

When the ship docked in New York, Henry went to the train station. His parents had given him money for a ticket to Salt Lake City before he left. He stepped up to the ticket counter and put

his money down. "I'd like a ticket to Salt Lake City, please," he said.

The ticket agent counted the money and frowned. "I'm sorry," he said, "but you only have enough money to go to Chicago."

Henry looked at a map on the wall and his heart sank. "But that's not even halfway!"



Henry with his dog back in England.

"I'm sorry, but that's as far as your money will take you," the ticket agent said. "Maybe in Chicago you can work to earn enough to go the rest of the way. There's always work for boys who are willing and strong."

"I'm willing and strong," Henry told him. "And my family is depending on me to get to Utah!"

Henry waited in the train station all night, sleeping on a bench with his trunk underneath. In the morning he heard the announcement that the train to Chicago was about to leave. He rushed to the train and sat near two



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little girls and their mother. As the train began to move, the girls turned to talk to Henry. "What's your name?" one of them asked. "Where are you going?" asked the other. Henry told them. The girls giggled at his accent and asked him all sorts of questions about England. Henry played games and sang songs with the two girls. It helped pass the time as the train clattered along.

At lunchtime the girls' mother opened her picnic basket. She offered Henry some of their cheese, apples, and bread. "I packed much more than we need," she said. "And you have been so kind to my children."

"Thank you," Henry said. It was the best food he'd tasted since he left home.

After several days, the train pulled into the station in Chicago. Henry said goodbye to the girls and their mother. Then he took his trunk and walked up to one of the conductors. "Do you know where I could find work?" Henry asked.

"All the supply wagons leave from the freight yards," the conductor told him. "You might try there." Henry thanked him and started off in that direction.

The freight yard was lined with rows of wagons loaded with coal, cotton, tools, flour, and sugar. Henry even spotted crates of ducks and chicken.

Henry found the freight master and explained to him that he needed to get to Utah.

"A man named Amos is heading out to the Utah Territory and might be willing to take you," the freight master said. "Amos looks a bit rough, but he's a good person. Look for a man with a red beard."

Henry said thank you, then turned and started down the rows of wagons. He clutched his trunk as he looked from wagon to wagon, searching for the man with the red beard who could take him to Utah.

Then, at the very end of the row, Henry saw him. ♦

To be continued . . .

The author lived in Utah, USA