

BEFORE THEIR HANDCARTS

BY DAVID R. GOLDEN

With hesitation they came
These would-be pioneers,
Aprons, bonnets, hats, suspenders,
Unfamiliar garb they donned
On that defining day.

Prayerfully patched together
Into families unfamiliar,
A new quiltwork of companionship,
Soon to be stitched together
In wondrous ways.

Now, a new perspective—
In the yoke, on the ropes,
Shoulders to the wheel.
Pioneer stories springing into reality
With each staggering step.

Challenged, confidence waning,
They groaned up steep slopes.
Questioning, How much longer?
This sweat, this dust,
These blistered feet.

High atop a mountain vale,
Where song and dance,
Laughter and quiet moments
Further honed and softened hearts,
And witnesses were borne.

Too soon came the last sunrise,
Charged with anticipation
And newfound strength.
Closer . . . closer . . . there!
The last cresting hill.

But somehow the journey's end
Seemed to them familiar,
For their hearts arrived in Zion
Long before their handcarts.

