

Part 3

Earning a Ride

By Geraldine Fielding

(Based on a true story)

Henry's family sent him from England to start a new life in Utah. But his journey took an unexpected detour when he didn't have enough money for a train ticket from Chicago to Salt Lake City. Then he heard about a man named Amos who was heading for the Utah Territory.

Henry walked up to the man named Amos. He had a snarly red beard, and he wasn't smiling.

"Excuse me?" Henry said in a small voice. He felt nervous but remembered that the freight master had said Amos was a good man.

"What do you want?" Amos growled.

"I . . . I heard you could take me to Utah," Henry stammered.

"I don't take passengers," Amos said. "I run a business."

"I'll work my way," Henry said.

Amos laughed. "What work could a boy like you do?"

"I can do lots of things!" Henry said.

Amos scratched his beard. "Do you know anything about horses?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Henry answered. "My papa worked on a big estate in England, and I helped him with the horses all the time."

"Is that so?" Amos smiled. He jerked his thumb at two horses tied to the back of the wagon. "Let's see you hitch up Old Buck and Rufus."

Henry walked over to the horses, patted their noses, and talked softly to them. Without any difficulty, he led them to the wagon and fastened the harnesses.

"Well, I'll be hornswaggled! Old Buck's usually cranky with strangers. You might



be handy to have along after all,” Amos said. “Climb in the wagon and let’s go.”

Amos was fun to travel with. He told interesting stories and listened to Henry talk about life in England.

But the trip was hard work too! Henry took care of the horses, gathered firewood, and carried water. He helped Amos hunt for dinner. When they couldn’t catch anything, they ate beef jerky and dried apples. At night they slept under the wagon.

After many weeks Henry spotted the tops of mountains against the bright blue sky. “The Utah Territory is

just on the other side,” Amos said.

When Henry got his first look at the land that would be his new home, he was surprised. It was nothing like the big cities or bright green fields he had left behind in England.

“Are you sure this is Utah?” Henry asked. “Maybe we took a wrong turn.”

Amos just chuckled.

Henry said goodbye to Amos in a town called Castle Gate and bought one last train ticket. Before he knew it, the train was hissing to a stop at the Salt Lake City depot. Henry jumped onto the wooden platform with a smile. He had made it!

Or had he? Henry quickly realized that he still didn’t know how to find his cousins. He started asking people if they knew the Lowe family. His stomach growled, and he shivered as the sun faded away.

Finally, he saw a man riding directly toward him.

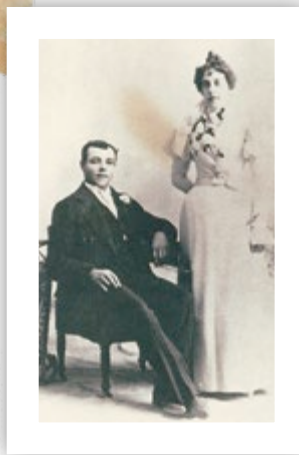
“Henry? My name is George Lowe,” the man said, sticking out his hand. “My family will be so happy to meet you! Climb in the wagon. You must be exhausted.”

That night Henry had a warm bed and good food. He was soon able to go to church. Utah started to feel like home.

It was a whole year before Henry’s father came to Utah. Then his mother and two brothers followed. Finally his older sister arrived.

Each of them had a different journey, and Henry was grateful that Heavenly Father had protected them all. They were together again at last! ◆

The author lived in Utah, USA.



When Henry William Groom was 15, he moved on his own to Idaho, USA. After a few years, the rest of his family joined him there. Later he married Ida Violet Strong, and they had seven children. He loved to sing and was a hard worker and a successful farmer. He died in 1960.