

# What's a Pioneer?



BY KERRYN HUGO

(Based on a true story)

*Come forth to Zion, or to her stakes* (D&C 109:39).

Amelia had heard a lot about pioneers over the last few weeks. Her family talked about them. Her Primary teacher talked about them. And in sacrament meeting today, a speaker had talked about them.

“What’s a pioneer?” Amelia wondered. She thought about pictures she had seen of pioneers. They all seemed to wear old-fashioned clothes, and from the



way their houses and wagons looked, Amelia thought they must have lived in the “olden days.” Maybe Poppy could tell her what a pioneer was. He was the oldest person Amelia knew!

“What’s a pioneer, Poppy?” Amelia asked.

“That depends on what kind of pioneer you mean,” her grandfather replied. “A pioneer is someone who does something new to prepare a way for other people. Someone who discovers how to make a plane that flies is a pioneer; so is someone who discovers new medicine to make sick people better. Or a pioneer could be someone in a family who goes to live in a new country.”

“Do we have pioneers in our family?” Amelia asked Daddy later as they cooked dinner.

“We sure do,” Daddy said. “Our pioneers came to Australia from different countries. A lot of them came from England, and some came from Germany. Some of Mummy’s pioneers came from Scotland.”

“Did they come to Australia in the olden days?” Amelia asked.

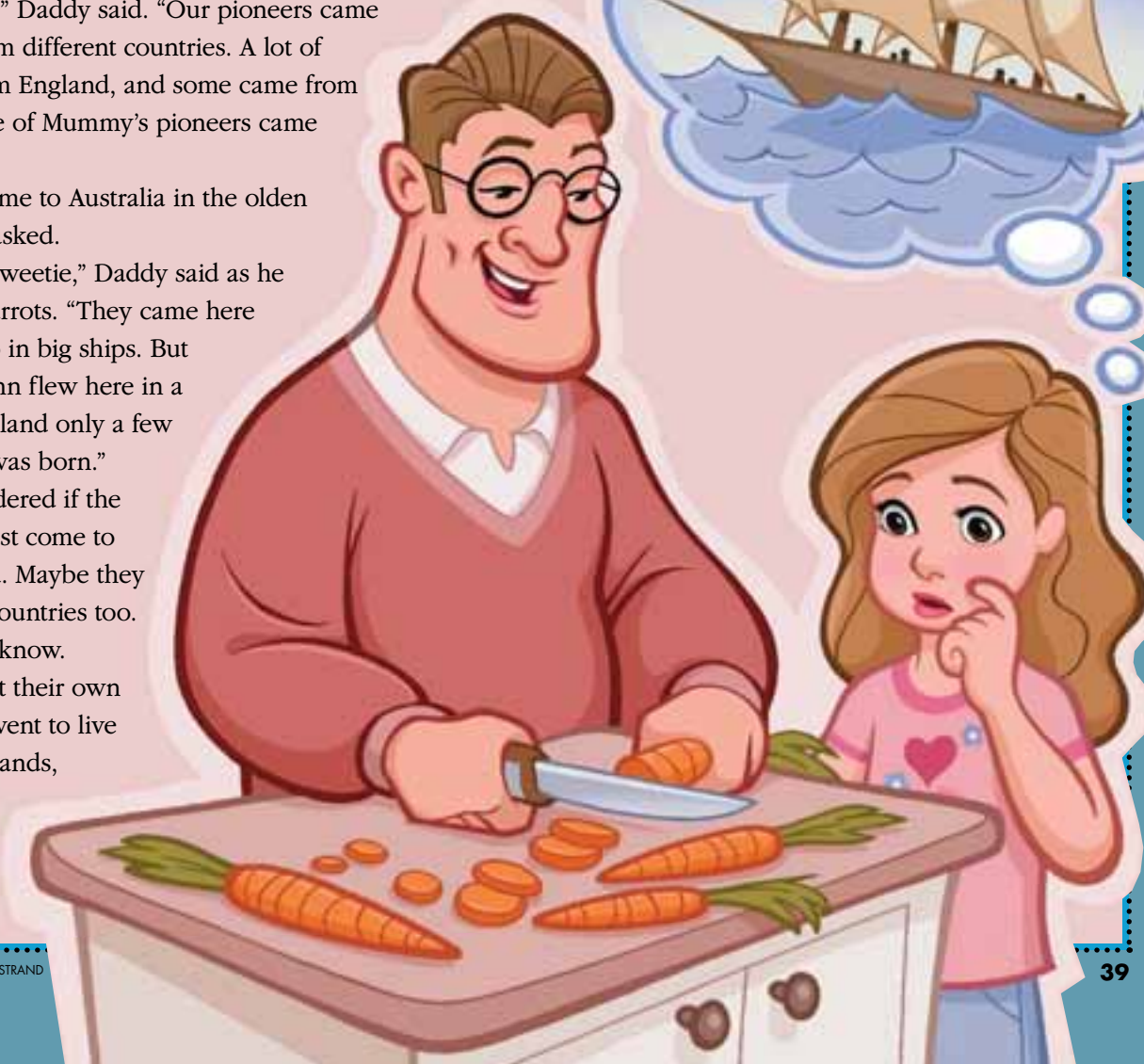
“Many did, Sweetie,” Daddy said as he chopped the carrots. “They came here a long time ago in big ships. But Granddad Swann flew here in a plane from England only a few years before I was born.”

Amelia wondered if the pioneers had just come to live in Australia. Maybe they went to other countries too. Mummy might know.

“Pioneers left their own countries and went to live in many other lands, not just Australia,” Mummy said.

“Did you know that a lot of people who joined our Church in the olden days left their own countries to live in America?”

The next Sunday in Primary, Sister Killalea showed the class some pictures of early Church pioneers. “These pioneers wanted very much to obey Heavenly Father,” Sister Killalea said. “But they were teased and tormented by angry people who didn’t understand about obeying Heavenly Father. A lot of these early



Church pioneers left their homes and walked a long, long way to a place where they could live in peace. When you go home, see if you can find out some things that happened to these pioneers to tell the class about next week.”

That evening, Amelia and Nanny were having a chat on the phone. “Nanny, you know the early Church pioneers who walked and walked?” Amelia said. “What happened to them on their trip?”

“Things were very difficult for them,” Nanny replied. “Most of them got hungry or cold or sick. Some even died. And many babies were born in wagons or under trees because there were no hospitals.”

“I’m glad I’m not a pioneer,” Amelia said. “Aren’t you, Nanny?”

Nanny thought for a moment. “I know I wasn’t born in the olden days, and I wasn’t born in another country. Nor did I go on a long walk like some other pioneers. But I’m still a pioneer.”

Amelia was amazed. “A pioneer? Why are you a pioneer?”

“Because when the missionaries taught me the gospel, I decided to join the Church, just like the early Church pioneers did,” Nanny explained. “Some of my family and friends were angry that I chose to obey Heavenly Father. Like other pioneers, I had to leave my home and go somewhere else to live.”

“Were you sad?” Amelia asked.

“Yes, I felt very sad,” Nanny said. “But I’m glad I was a pioneer, because Poppy and our children—including your mum—are all members of Jesus Christ’s true Church. And I’m also happy, Amelia, because you too are learning about Heavenly Father and Jesus and the right way to live.”

When Mummy tucked Amelia into bed that night, Amelia smiled. “Nanny’s a pioneer!”

“Yes,” Mummy said, “and you can be a pioneer too when you try hard to choose the right and help share the gospel with your friends.”

As Amelia drifted off to sleep, she felt happy to know all the things she had found out about pioneers. Some were old and some were young. Some lived in other countries and some lived right here in Australia. Some lived a long time ago and some live today. And Amelia could be a pioneer too! ●



“A dictionary defines a pioneer as ‘one who goes before, showing others the way to follow.’ Oh, how the world needs pioneers today!”

**President Thomas S. Monson<sup>3</sup>**

