

# HANDCART DAYS

The First 50 Years—1950-2000

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*Summaries compiled by Mitch McEwan (2024)*

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## Handcart Companies

Between 1856 and 1860 nearly 3,000 emigrants from the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints joined ten handcart companies--about 650 handcarts total--and walked to Utah from Iowa City, Iowa, (a distance of 1,300 miles) or from Florence, Nebraska (1,030 miles). Among these courageous handcart pioneers were cobblers, factory workers, farmers, fishermen, and aristocrats. Swiss, Danish, Scottish, Norwegian, Welsh and English immigrants often didn't share the same language. However, they did share the same desire to reach the Rocky Mountains and live among the members of their newfound church. This was, according to historian LeRoy Hafen, "the most remarkable travel experiment in the history of Western America." <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/54974>

- Hafen, LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen. *Handcarts to Zion : the story of a unique western migration 1856-1860, with contemporary journals, accounts, reports, and rosters of members of the ten handcart companies*. Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, 1960, 1976. FS Library 289.309 H119h

Handcart Company	Captain	Left Florence	Individuals	Died en route	Arrived Salt Lake City
<u>First</u>	Edmund Ellsworth	20 Jul 1856	274	13	26 Sep 1856
<u>Second</u>	Daniel D. McArthur	24 Jul 1856	221	7	26 Sep 1856
<u>Third (Welsh)</u>	Edward Bunker	30 Jul 1856	320	< 7	2 Oct 1856
<u>Fourth/Willie</u>	<u>James G. Willie</u>	17 Aug 1856	~404	68	9 Nov 1856
<u>Fifth/Martin</u>	Edward Martin	27 Aug 1856	576	>145	30 Nov 1856
<u>Sixth</u>	Israel Evans	20 Jun 1857	149	(0)	11 Sep 1857
<u>Seventh Scandinavian</u>	Christian Christiansen	15 Jul 1857	~330	~6	13 Sep 1857
<u>Eighth</u>	George Rowley	9 Jun 1859	235	~5	4 Sep 1859
<u>Ninth</u>	Daniel Robison	6 Jun 1860	233	1	27 Aug 1860
<u>Tenth</u>	Oscar O. Stoddard	6 Jul 1860	124	0	24 Sep 1860

A History Account of the Handcart Days Celebration in Davis County, Utah. (Original)

Between 1856 and 1860, more than 3000 members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints embarked upon a long and treacherous journey to the Salt Lake Valley with only a wooden handcart to carry their belongings. Men, women, and children of all ages and ethnic backgrounds marched several thousand miles by foot in search of a homeland where they could live and worship as they chose. So challenging and demanding was the handcart pioneer trail that hundreds of those who began the strenuous journey died along the way. Because of the sacrifices of these brave people in their push toward a homeland, their Zion was realized in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. It is a saga of those pioneers filled with tears and triumph that we celebrate.

Handcart Days is an annual July celebration held in Davis County immediately north of Salt Lake City, UT, as a remembrance of the struggle and hardship faced by the handcart pioneers as they trek to the great America West. The Handcart Day celebration originated in February of 1950 in the small northern Utah town of Bountiful. The 1st celebration was small and consisted of only two events and less than 2500 participants. Fifty years later, the same celebration encompasses more than a dozen annual events and more than 125,000 participants in one or more activities.

Handcart Days have served not only as a noted regional commemoration of handcart pioneer contributions but also as an answer to a practical need to create an alternative for families unable or not desiring to travel about 10 miles into Salt Lake City for the world's largest annual pioneer celebration, the Days of '47 also known as Pioneer Days. Over the years, the

celebration has grown significantly into a major festival in its own right, drawing participants from around the world.

The arrival of a new decade century and Millennium provides an opportune time for Americans to look back upon our great nation's remarkable growth, progress, and contributions. This same opportunity exists for the progeny of the Utah handcart pioneers and for the countless others who have benefited from their courage and actions. The US Library of Congress and the local Legacies Project have provided a way to facilitate that review and to share the results with potentially millions of interested individuals with the use of the electronic Internet. Through the support and thoughtful efforts of US Congressman James V Hansen, Utah's First Congressional District, and a team of capable Handcart Days staff, the Handcart Day celebration is literally and excitedly being shared with the world.

This narrative report of the local Legacy Projects depicts the purposes for, historical growth of, and changes in the handcart day celebration in a decade-by-decade review. The review focuses on identifying all major aspects of the celebration, from organizational leadership to the changing events that have captured the rich cultural traditions that we annually observe. An exhibit section of the final submitted project combines press releases, newspaper clippings, program brochures, and photographs in a chronological montage of 50 years of celebration and memories.

#### A History To Remember and To Celebrate

It was a warm desert summer morning on July 24th, 1847, when pioneer leader Brigham Young, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, entered the valley of the great Salt Lake with the last group of the vanguard wagon company. Those who traveled with

the Vanguard Pioneer Company were the first of some 70,000 initial volunteers to migrate from around the world to the new desert territory, which would later become the State of Utah. The volunteers were pioneers who settled the Deseret Territory and created a 'Crossroads of the West' in the foothills of the great Rocky Mountains.

Since its humble beginnings of six members in 1830, The Church of Jesus Christ of latter-day Saints had suffered varied persecutions at the hands of antagonistic groups and individuals. Just three years before their entry into the Great Salt Lake Valley of 1844, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1st president, Joseph Smith Jr., and his brother Hiram were martyred by an angry mob. After the death of Joseph Smith Jr., the church's second president, Brigham Young, issued a church-wide call for all members of the fledgling church to "head west". The readiness and faith with which thousands of church members responded to President Young's call, often at great personal sacrifice, has been admired and remembered by many over the many years since the Great Western migration began.

Before the advent of the cross-continental railroad, many of the early settlers moving west crossed the Great Plains and challenging mountains in covered wagons and on foot. However, the years 1856 through 1860 saw the utilization of a truly unique and remarkable means of transportation, the handcart. Settlers who had previously migrated westward on foot, did so mostly with the aid of animals, either packing or pulling rations and personal belongings behind them and covered wagons. However, not all faithful church members desiring to answer President Brigham Young's call had the financial resources to travel in the preferred method of the day. Many members responded from European and Scandinavian nations and Scandinavian countries; using precious financial resources to arrange for boat passage to the United States.

The financial resources then required to travel west to Zion, the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, which was often a great problem for members who had already spent limited family savings.

Although the plan to migrate with handcarts was initiated by President Brigham Young in 1852, it wasn't until 1856 that major companies of Saints began traveling together in companies of handcarts. From 1856 to 1860, approximately 3000 of these truly courageous pioneers made their way, usually well over 1000 miles in the distance, to the Great Salt Lake Valley with the assistance of only a rudimentary two-wheeled, man-powered handcart. A total of 10 different companies, comprised generally of several 100 church members, were organized and came west during the 1856 to 1860 time period.

With the use of handcarts, migration had now been made more economically feasible for persons with limited resources and great personal desires. Thousands of Saints, as they were called, chose to pack their possessions in handcarts and head west with great faith and determination. Along the way, many perished in early winter snows and other treacherous weather conditions, as well as those who struggled with such a long walk and the infirmities of old age. Babies were born along the trail, and many died without a proper environment to nurse them through their early challenges. Faith and determination were essential to survive the ordeals of the handcart experience, and many succeeded with memories to fill a lifetime.

“Handcarts” employed by early members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints settlers were not unlike those used today by porters and peddlers in most major United States cities. Made almost exclusively of wood due to the cost of more expensive material alternatives and a limited amount of iron, hand carts were only able to transport a fraction of the weight that larger and more well-designed covered wagons carried. Immigrants were

generally limited to only 15 to 20 lbs. each of personal belongings. The hand carts also had to carry sufficient food and clothing to complete the trip and begin their new life in Zion.

### Handcart Days 50 Years of Celebration

On February 28th, 1950, two Stake Presidents from the Bountiful and South Davis Stakes, which are ecclesiastical groupings of approximately 3000 church members residing in a common geographical area, met together with the purpose of organizing a celebration in Utah's second oldest city, Bountiful to commemorate the handcart pioneer experience. The celebration was to be named Handcart Days, an acknowledgment of those persons who were a part of what has been referred to by historians as the most remarkable travel experiment in the history of Western America.

Celebrations honoring the contributions of pioneers have notably grown in size, number, and diversity since the 1st celebration in 1847, attended by less than 150 persons in downtown Great Salt Lake City to millions of participants today in various activities around the world. More than 125,000 participants attended the 1999 Handcart Day celebration events. Surely all of those who took part in the first Handcart Days in 1950 and those who have continued our own local legacy in the 50 years since have endeavored to keep the memory of the handcart migration alive and before new generations of Americans.

The types of Handcart Days celebration events, its administrative support structure and functions, human and financial resources, administration, and methods of communication and advertising are among the many attributes that have changed over the past five decades. These changes have largely reflected changes in the local culture, types of recreational activities

appropriate for that time, and delicately balanced administrative relationships involving church and state.

The following decade-by-decade historical review was primarily a result of the efforts of Matthew D. Hanson and Brad Cowley, University of Utah students representing two of the nearly 5000 volunteers who contribute their time and talents annually to the Handcart Day celebration. Matt and Brad spent time and effort researching past Handcart Day celebration events through a historical record found largely through the archives of Davis County Clipper and the Deseret News. Matt and Brad are also two of more than a dozen Local Legacy Project Committee members who are responsible for the report and materials that constitute our package for the US Library of Congress.

Special note is given to the 50-year support role of the Davis County Clipper located in Bountiful UT, its ownership and great staff. The Clipper has done more to capture the essence of Handcart Days since 1950 than any single source of information or media. Additional appreciation goes to the Deseret News, Salt Lake Tribune, and Ogden Standard-Examiner newspapers for their documentation support for decades. True community celebrations that are highly dependent upon voluntary acts of support are equally dependent upon the coverage of community newspapers. Handcart Days is such a celebration.

Additional gratitude is expressed to the municipal governments of Bountiful, North Salt Lake, Woods Cross, West Bountiful, and Centerville for their ongoing commitment to Handcart Days. Each government has willingly stepped forward when requested to provide appropriate support ranging from paramedics to amusement licenses, from crowd control to transportation.



Finally, Handcart Days would only be possible with the more than 5000 volunteers who make it all possible. In fact, our volunteer staff, from the chairman to our parade clowns, are the heart and soul of the celebration itself. The same exemplary community spirit and service given us by the handcart pioneers is amply visible in their children's children who are our volunteers and pioneers of the future.

The story of Handcart Days has also been an experiment in cooperative community ventures involving church, government, and public and private enterprise. With rare exceptions, Handcart Day staff have been able to weave a tapestry of true community celebration, one with participation by all major sectors of a community. Although The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints plays a prominent role in Handcart Days, you are likely to see Grand Parade entries and other events with other religious denominations, varied business groups, nonprofit service clubs, and heavy government representation.

#### The First Decade, 1950 through 1959

The first decade of Handcart Day celebrations is characterized by its growth from an idea discussed between leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on a cold February morning in 1950 to a well-established, highly organized, popular event for all of the South Davis community.

Oral history and cursory notes from a 1952 Handcart days committee meeting identify the time of Handcart Day's origin to be the end of February 1950, specifically February 28th. According to available information, two Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Bountiful and South Davis Stakes, decided to combine their individual Pioneer Day festivities into a celebration for the whole community. Prior to 1950, celebration activities for Pioneer Day

on July 24th had been less formally organized by neighborhood Wards, (which are smaller ecclesiastical units of about 500 members that, when combined, form Stakes) and an occasional Stake activity. Families and individuals wanting the flavor of a large city celebration would usually drive into Salt Lake City for the famed Days of 47 Celebrations.

Details of the first organized celebration in 1950 are not well documented. This may be because the entire South Davis County area's population at the time was under 8000 residents. It is known, however, that the first-hand cart day celebration and all of those to follow were led by a Grand Parade through the downtown Bountiful City.

By 1952 and 1953, the Handcart Days celebration was well enough established that residents were encouraged to “stay at home, be at home” to enjoy the July 24th celebration. The motto “Stay at home, Be at home” acknowledges that many residents had previously depended upon Salt Lake City's Days of '47 celebrations for their entertainment and participation. “Staying at home” meant that thousands of people were being encouraged to forego the 12-mile car ride south to join their neighbors to commemorate the state holiday. Events of the 1952 celebration included the grand parade, a bake sale, a pet show, food and games concessions, a baseball game between Bountiful and South Davis State, and a pioneer “old folks” program including cowboy poetry, music, and yodeling. By 1953, the Handcart Days grand parade involve 13 wards and several local business sponsors as well totaling a mammoth parade with 50 to 60 entries, the largest parade in the 50s decade in Bountiful. The 1953 celebration also witnessed the first official Handcart Days celebration theme, “Old Folks”. Themes throughout the remainder of the decade took on more of a religious orientation, including the “Faith of our Fathers,” “This is Still the Place!” and “This is Our Story.”

Throughout the remainder of the decade of the 50s, various activities and events found their way into and many out of the Handcart Days celebration. The more prominent activities of the decade included the Grand Parade, the primary children's parade, food concessions and games, candy scramble for children, water shows of swimming and diving, varieties show, pet show, pageants, handicraft show, and sell, and athletic strength ability contests.

Important directions were clearly taken during the decade that helped define the Handcart Day celebrations of the future: 1. was the formation of a campaign encouraging people to stay at home to celebrate the 24th of July rather than go into Salt Lake City. 2. Handcart Days became acknowledged as a community-wide celebration that brought church, government, and commercial sectors of the local community together annually. 3. the local leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints continued to provide the primary energy, direction, and financial resources for the entire celebration. Business involvement was limited but welcomed. 4. The Grand Parade was the only event to continue throughout each of the ten celebrations of the decade. It grew to approximately 60 parade entries, a 1-mile route, and an estimated 7500 to 10,000 spectators along the parade route. The parade had actually been a tradition dating back to 1857. 5. The funds raised by revenue-producing activities were used primarily for the building of new church and recreational facilities for local members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

#### The 2nd decade, 1960 through 1969

Through the 1960s, the Handcart Days organizing or executive committees were declared and committed to “wholesome entertainment for the entire family.” The local Bountiful area community responded favorably to that commitment by supporting the

continued growth of the celebration. The 1960s were also characterized by a growing diversity of activities, which was reflected in a decade of social and political change in America as well.

The Grand Parade was probably the primary, if not the most visible recipient of the celebration's growth during the decade. The 1960 parade had only 28 entries. By 1969, the parade boasted 113 entries, which was a competitive size to the fame Days of '47 parade. The growth was made possible by an important decision made in 1962 to begin holding the Grand Parade on July 23rd rather than on July 24th, avoiding direct competition with the Days of '47 parade. Among the numerous reasons for the change were: 1. Citizens of South Davis County who were used to attending the Days of '47 parade would now be given the opportunity if interested in attending both parades. 2. Floats, bands, and other entries in the Handcart Days Grand Parade would now have the opportunity to potentially participate in both parades. A tradition that has remained through the 1999 parade. 3. Out-of-state bands and entries were attracted by the possibility of being in two parades over the two days.

The Grand Parades of the 1960s were also characterized by a growing diversity of themes, entries, and formats. In 1962, the parade was a reenactment of the parade of 1857, 105 years earlier, which was the first known parade in Bountiful City and all of South Davis County. Prominent 1857 parade historical figures like leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Lorenzo Snow and Heber C Kimball, as well as explorer and trappers Peter Skeine Ogden and Jim Bridger. By 1963, the Grand Parade included ten dancing Native Americans in native costumes and the renowned Salt Lake Scotts Bagpipe Band. With the disbanding of the Handcart Days children's parade during the 1960s, children were now invited to participate in the Grand Parade. Junior and Senior High School bands began to march and

play in the parade in the mid-1960s and have continued to play a prominent role to the present day. With the addition of announcers and loudspeakers along the parade route, the Handcart Days Grand Parade was set to compete with any local community parade in America for quality and excitement.

Handcart Days experience other changes and notable occurrences in the 1960s in addition to those affecting the Grand Parade. Sporting and related field events became very visible and diverse in competition. Softball games and swimming competition was joined by model airplane flying, go-kart racing, foot races, tug-of-war contests, and even greased pig chasing as a sample of these unique new events. Other prominent activities of the decade celebrations in addition to those previously identified include 1. A variety talent show. 2. Chess and checkers tournament 3. Carnival rides 4. Firefighting demonstration 5. Water show 6. Water fight at the Bountiful Park 7. An array of pageants, plays, musicals, 8. Fireworks displays, 9. Tennis tournaments, 10. horseshoe pitching contests, 11. food and games, concessions, 12. Polynesian night food and dancing, 13. Chuckwagon breakfasts.

During the decade, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints continued to provide the primary financial support to help administer and advertise the celebration. Most of the proceeds from revenue-producing events went to buy the land for and to develop Camp Piuta Girl's Camp.

Among the more prominent and remembered Handcart Days celebration themes of the decade were "The First 20 Years of the church," "Let Freedom Ring," "Pioneer Ideals", and "From Railways to Spaceways."

### The 3rd Decade 1970 through 1979

Entering its third decade of celebration, Handcart Days was established with both a general format and organizational structure. The format through the 1960s had been to conduct all activities and events on July 23rd and 24th, avoiding direct competition with the Days of '47 Parade. During the 1970s, the two-day format was dropped with the advent of a regularly held pioneer-theme fireside and an amateur art show. A steering committee now directed the activities of Handcart Days with a combination of Church and civic leaders participating.

A fireside sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and open to the general public, it became a regularly featured event in the 1970s and continues today. Speakers were generally selected as they are today from among the local and church-wide leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The fireside was moved to different locations, from the grounds of the historical Bountiful Tabernacle to the beautiful majestic rolling lawn of Bountiful Park and the Bountiful/Woods Cross Regional Center.

An amateur art exhibition also began as an opportunity for local non-professional artists to display their talents in multiple art forms. A pioneer or Western theme was encouraged for the displayed artwork but optional. Paintings, drawings, sculptures, and quilts with varied themes were entered, and ribbons were awarded to the best work.

Because of an unfortunate accident during a fireworks display, a delayed firework shell exploded before the family of the former Bountiful Mayor, causing injuries; the fireworks event disappeared during the 1970s. Until the fireworks show was reinstated in 1991 under strict fire code and safety restrictions, celebrants interested in pyrotechnics were encouraged to go south to Salt Lake City or north to either the Lagoon resort and Farmington or to Ogden City. Despite the temporary loss of the fireworks display, events that constituted Handcart Days continued to

grow and reflect the day's culture, traditions, and popular activities. Some of the more notable events now included: 1. Grand Parade 2. 10-kilometer race 3. Food, games, and rides concessions 4. Water show 5. Historical tour of Bountiful 6. Skydiving exhibition 7. Softball tournament 8. Gymnastics demonstration 9. Musical events 10. Pageants 11. Band competition 12. Antique car show 13. Chuck wagon breakfast 14. Field event races and competitions.

The 1970s experienced a continued administrative partnership between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Bountiful City, community, and commercial groups. The primary leadership and fiduciary responsibility was that of the church leadership, although all local community sectors were again encouraged to join the festivities.

The themes of the celebration continued along pioneering topics such as “Pioneering the Seventies” and “Pioneers and Patriots.”

#### The 4th Decade, 1980 through 1989

Thirty years into celebrating the handcart pioneer experience, the decade of the 1980s brought a concerted effort to make handcart days “bigger and better.” Addressing the challenge of making the celebration “bigger and better” required additional financial and human resources and increased sophistication regarding public relations, logistics, transportation, and recreation. The steering committee became the executive committee. Additional volunteers in the community were called upon to assist with the number of very variety of events. Several fundraising events were added to the celebrations to help make Handcart Days more self-sustaining.

Because of the historical involvement in the celebration, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was predictably the best source for needed volunteer and financial labor.

Heavier dependence upon church member volunteers became essential, as did a more primary role for the church in defining the types of celebration activities and how they were managed.

In a 1988 letter from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Area Presidency, it was requested that all 14 Stakes support the celebration and that all funding from the celebration be redirected towards paying for celebration activities in future years.

During the 1980s, several innovations were added to various activities while other events grew in popularity and participation. In 1989, one such new edition was a performance stage created for use in Bountiful Park for an ensemble of live entertainment. The performers who played, sang, and danced on the stage added flavor and excitement to the traditional food and game concessions. To the delight of those in attendance, entertainment also expanded to include musical bands that played as they wandered through the 10-acre park. The time was not right to return the highly requested fireworks display following the accident nearly 20 years earlier to the celebration. Other notable celebration events of the decade included: 1. Grand Parade 2. Fireside 3. Chuck Wagon Breakfast 4. Mountain man demonstrations 5. Soccer tournament 6. Skydiving exhibition 7. Horseshoe pitching competition 8. Dance Festival 9. History tour of Bountiful 10. Antique Car Show 11. An array of musicals and plays 12. Free family swimming 13. Amateur art exhibits 14. Softball tournaments.

#### The 5th decade, 1990 through 1999

Handcart Days are financially administered under the religious non-profit organizational tax status of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [501 (c)(3) IRS]. Accordingly, each year's celebration until early 1990 was underwritten financially by the participating Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Stakes and Wards that participated in Handcart Days. Most of



the previous decade's celebrations have been self-sustaining to cover the year's expenses; however, there were exceptions.

As the 5th decade of celebrations began, there was a growing concern among Handcart Day's leadership in ensuring the financial stability of future celebrations. Once or twice every decade, rain and inclement weather, including a late July snowstorm in 1955 with 30 inches more snow, required financial support from local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Stakes to ensure solvency. Serious consideration was given to models of financial stability that could prevent anxious moments and celebration fragility.

A second concern greeting the decade of the 1990s was articulated by Handcart Day's leadership as a growing concern about how “best” to take the celebration into the new Millennium. A wide dimension of questions needed to be addressed thoughtfully and timely. Should the celebration continue to expand? Should efforts be made to put a substantial financial footing under the celebration to ensure it would be self-sustaining? Should the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continue as the primary sponsor and organizer of the overall celebration, or should participation by the government and the business community grow? What actions, if any, should be taken to revitalize and expand the celebration?

Throughout the 1980s, the Handcart Days celebration experienced increased involvement, guidance, and resources from Bountiful City government and commercial business groups. By the end of the 1980s the celebration leadership and direction was determined as a “partnership” of near equal efforts and resources. The partnership was comfortable for all parties until the early 1990s.

In the early 1990s, the celebration had significantly grown in size and dimension. An estimated 40,000 to 50,000 people participated in one or more of the annual celebration events. Bountiful City, as a primary sponsor of events, became increasingly concerned about the human and financial resources that were now required and would likely be required as the community and celebration continued to grow. There was also a growing concern about the growing legal liabilities that follow large recreational events.

Bountiful City and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reached an agreement that the church would once again take the primary financial and human resource responsibilities. Bountiful City would participate by providing auxiliary support services like communication, police protection, crowd control, paramedic assistance, etc., and would sponsor recreational and fireworks support. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would be primarily responsible for all other activities, necessary resources, and support services. The model that emerged from this unique cooperative effort between the government, church, and business has been both highly successful and comfortable. The relationship has since remained constant and grown in a cooperative spirit and intent into the new millennium.

The 1998 Handcart Days committee, under the direction of the Utah North Area Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Handcart Days chairman Dr. M David Hansen, a series of initiatives were approved for implementation by the Handcart Days Committee. The most important of these initiatives was a confirmation that through the 2002 celebration, Handcart Days would remain a “community-based” celebration rather than attempt to heavily expand and involve resources and attention similar to those of the Salt Lake Days of

'47 celebration and its competing events. Handcart Days would continue to serve its initial purpose: "To provide alternative Pioneer Days (24th of July) activities for the families of Southern Davis County," not in competition with but in harmony with other celebration activities of other local communities.

Other authorized initiatives that address the future growth and direction of the celebration included: 1. Although the current and anticipated size of the celebration could justify expanded commercialism and nonlocal merchant participation, Handcart Days would continue to minimize such involvement. Considerable pressure to expand and to allow more "sponsorship" was being placed upon the Executive Committee and Handcart Days staff. Any commercial sponsorship would be at the discretion of the Handcart Days Chairman and council with the Committee. 2. The Handcart Days committee would begin an event-by-event review of all sponsored celebration activities to ensure that each event had a "pioneer" focus. The committee also accepted the challenge to find new ways to help expose and educate the public about the handcart pioneer experience. Dramatic plans were made to take action before the new century. 3. Expansion of the celebration in 1999 to the year 2002 would include planned growth to 29 Stakes and 240 Wards and Branches of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints covering the entire southern half of Davis County including Bountiful Utah Stake, Bountiful Utah Central Stake, Bountiful Utah Stake, Bountiful Utah Height Stake, Bountiful Utah Mueller Park Stake, Bountiful Utah North Stake, Bountiful Utah North Canyon Stake, Bountiful Utah Orchard Stake, Bountiful Utah South Stake, Bountiful Utah Stone Creek Stake, Bountiful Utah Val Verda Stake, Centerville Utah Stake, Centerville Utah County Canyon View Stake, Centerville Utah North Stake, Centerville Utah South Stake, Farmington Utah Stake, Farmington

Utah North Stake, Farmington Utah Oak Ridge Stake, Farmington Utah South Stake, Fruit Heights Utah Stake, Kaysville Utah Stake, Kaysville Utah Central Stake, Kaysville Utah Crestview Stake, Kaysville Utah East Stake, Kaysville Utah South Stake, North Salt Lake Utah Stake, North Salt Lake Utah Parkway Stake, West Bountiful Utah Stake, Woods Cross Utah Stake. 4.

Decentralization of current and future events to each of the eight involved communities:

Bountiful, Centerville, Farmington, Fruit Heights, Kaysville, North Salt Lake, West Bountiful, and Woods Cross. Each community would be invited to take a celebration event other than the Grand Parade in downtown Bountiful or add a new celebration event to be held in the local community and administered by the local Stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The number of Handcart Days events would be expected to grow by several annually over the four year decentralization period. There was an expectation to acknowledge that “taking the celebration to the citizens” was both timely and appropriate to facilitate all objectives. 5. Handcart Days would be expected to remain self-sustaining financially so that each year's celebration events would be expected to cover all expenses of the year in which they were held and provide seed money to begin the celebration for the following year. This would be accomplished through several fundraising activities during each year's celebration. No financial assistance would be requested from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or any participating municipality to guarantee self-sustained celebrations.

As the initiatives of 1998 began to be implemented, Handcart Days '99 remarkably experienced phenomenal growth, including 1. The largest Grand Parade in the celebration's history, with an estimated 75,000 spectators lining the parade route in downtown Bountiful. The largest crowd was treated to the largest number of parade entries, numbering over 120. By the

late 1990s, the National Parade Association listed the Grand Parade as one of America's 17th largest parades, along with the Days of '47 Parade at #3 and the Provo Freedom Festival at #11.

2. The Handcart Days art exhibit at the Bountiful Davis Art Center drew hundreds of exhibit entries, finally presenting over 200 displayed entries and an estimated 1200 to 1500 exhibit visitors over the month-long event. Additional recognition categories were added to the awards program to encourage the participation of more youth and handicraft entries.

3. Circumstances warranted relocating the 1999 Family Fireside to the grounds and building of the beautiful over-hundred-year-old Bountiful Tabernacle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Bountiful Tabernacle is the oldest meetinghouse in continuous use in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is a city landmark. With supportive weather, beautiful music, and spoken word, including the main address by Elder John H. Groberg, General Authority of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the special event attracted an estimated Sunday evening record crowd of 4000 people.

4. Bountiful Park has hosted Handcart Days food, games, rides, and outside entertainment during the entire history of the celebration. In 1999, all activities received unprecedented support in the number of participants and fundraising. An estimated 30,000 persons attended part or all of the two-day celebration. Carnival rides, new food concession menus, expanded games and rides, a band concert by participating band entries from the Grand Parade, handcart arts and crafts sales, and theater stage-based entertainment were all responsible for the remarkable two days. The events resulted in the largest revenue-producing experience in the history of the celebration.

5. Bountiful Cities Handcart Days fireworks display at Mueller Park Junior High welcomed another record crowd of over 7,000 people to the most spectacular pyrotechnic presentation in the area's memory. Bountiful City Recreation also sponsored multiple recreational events, from a softball tournament to a free swim and ice skating at the area Sports Complex.

The re-emphasis upon pioneer heritage and handcart pioneers, especially in the 1990s, was reflected in the themes that were selected for the celebrations, such as: "Pioneering Into The Next Century," "Faith in Every Footstep," and "The Pioneering Spirit – A Family Tradition." Two significant Utah State milestone celebrations also helped to enhance the community awareness of the pioneer experience: a Utah Centennial celebration in 1996 and the 1997 sesquicentennial celebration of the Mormon pioneer's arrival in the Salt Lake Valley.

In addition to the Grand Parade, Handcart Day celebrations of the 1990s continued many of the traditions of the past yet reintroduced and began new events as well: 1. Fireside 2. Clown College 3. Chuck wagon breakfast 4. Free event shuttle bus transportation 5. Art exhibit and competition 6. Horseshoes pitching competition 7. Dance festival 8. Historical Tours of Bountiful 9. Variety talent show 10. Arrays of musicals and plays 11. Free family swimming and ice skating 12. Concession food, games, rides.

#### Summary and comments

As Handcart Days acknowledges its 50th celebration anniversary in the year 2000, the volunteer staff and administration are confident in a bright and exciting future for the celebration. Plans are underway for the 2000 celebration that will see the addition of new entertainment events, an extended parade route into nearby Centerville, a rare Saturday morning Grand Parade, an extended art exhibit run, and a community fundraising effort for a

handcart sculpture legacy for Bountiful Park. Record attendance is anticipated as a celebration extends Bountiful Park activity over three days and doubles the time that entertainment and concessions will be open.

As the new residents of Great Salt Lake City watched the first Pioneer Dear Pioneer Day parade in 1849, it lasted almost 30 minutes and consisted mainly of men and boys on horses and marching women. Could any of them have envisioned the fanfare of future resulting celebrations? Indeed, many early pioneers would have been honored to know that their cause would result in the desert and their children's future "blossoming as a rose" and deserving the remembrance of so many generations to follow. As the 1999 handcart days theme suggested, "Pioneering Into The Next Century," we believe that we are the pioneers to generations yet unborn. Will we make contributions worthy of historical remembrance? Will we leave a local legacy worthy of celebration?

The purpose of Handcart Days is to remember, celebrate, and encourage the contributions and sacrifices of pioneers in the past, at present, and in the future. As stated by the Handcart Days committee.

In 2023, the following was added to the Handcart Days, "Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future." Handcart Days is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the pioneer spirit that lives in all of us, regardless of our backgrounds and journeys.

## Handcart Days Summary (Large)

<b>Handcart Company</b>	<b>Captain</b>	<b>Left Florence</b>	<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Died en route</b>	<b>Arrived Salt Lake City</b>
<u><a href="#">First</a></u>	Edmund Ellsworth	20 Jul 1856	274	13	26 Sep 1856
<u><a href="#">Second</a></u>	Daniel D. McArthur	24 Jul 1856	221	7	26 Sep 1856
<u><a href="#">Third (Welsh)</a></u>	Edward Bunker	30 Jul 1856	320	< 7	2 Oct 1856
<u><a href="#">Fourth/Willie</a></u>	<u><a href="#">James G. Willie</a></u>	17 Aug 1856	~404	68	9 Nov 1856
<u><a href="#">Fifth/Martin</a></u>	Edward Martin	27 Aug 1856	576	>145	30 Nov 1856
<u><a href="#">Sixth</a></u>	Israel Evans	20 Jun 1857	149	(0)	11 Sep 1857
<u><a href="#">Seventh Scandinavian</a></u>	Christian Christiansen	15 Jul 1857	~330	~6	13 Sep 1857
<u><a href="#">Eighth</a></u>	George Rowley	9 Jun 1859	235	~5	4 Sep 1859
<u><a href="#">Ninth</a></u>	Daniel Robison	6 Jun 1860	233	1	27 Aug 1860
<u><a href="#">Tenth</a></u>	Oscar O. Stoddard	6 Jul 1860	124	0	24 Sep 1860

“It was a warm desert summer morning on July 24th, 1847, when pioneer leader Brigham Young, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake with the last group of the vanguard wagon company. Those who traveled with the Vanguard Pioneer Company were the first of some 70,000 initial volunteers to migrate from around the world to the new desert territory, which would later become the State of Utah. The volunteers were pioneers who settled the Deseret Territory and created a ‘Crossroads of the West’ in the foothills of the great Rocky Mountains.

Since its humble beginnings of six members in 1830, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has suffered varied persecutions from antagonistic groups and individuals. Just three years before their entry into the Great Salt Lake Valley of 1844, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1st president, Joseph Smith Jr., and his brother Hiram were martyred by an angry mob. After the death of Joseph Smith Jr., the church's second president, Brigham Young, issued a church-wide call for all members of the fledgling church to “head west.” The readiness and faith with which thousands of church members responded to President Young's call, often at great personal sacrifice, has been admired and remembered by many for years since the Great Western migration began.

Before the advent of the cross-continental railroad, many early settlers moving west crossed the Great Plains and challenging mountains in covered wagons and on foot. However, the years 1856 through 1860 saw the utilization of a truly unique and remarkable means of transportation, the “Handcart.” Settlers who had previously migrated westward on foot did so mostly with the aid of animals, either packing or pulling rations and personal belongings behind them in covered wagons. However, not all faithful church members desiring to answer President Brigham Young's call had the financial resources to travel in the preferred method of the day. Many members responded from European and Scandinavian nations and Scandinavian countries, using precious financial resources to arrange for boat passage to the United States.



The financial resources then required to travel west to Zion, the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, which was often a great problem for members who had already spent limited family savings.

Although the plan to migrate with handcarts was initiated by President Brigham Young in 1852, it wasn't until 1856 that major companies of Saints began traveling together in companies of handcarts. From 1856 to 1860, approximately 3000 of these truly courageous pioneers made their way, usually well over 1000 miles, to the Great Salt Lake Valley with only a rudimentary two-wheeled, man-powered handcart. A total of 10 different companies, comprised generally of several hundred church members, were organized and came west during the 1856 to 1860 time period.

#### Handcart Companies

Between 1856 and 1860, nearly 3,000 emigrants from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints joined ten handcart companies--about 650 handcarts total--and walked to Utah from Iowa City, Iowa (a distance of 1,300 miles) or from Florence, Nebraska (1,030 miles). Among these courageous handcart pioneers were cobblers, factory workers, farmers, fishermen, and aristocrats. Swiss, Danish, Scottish, Norwegian, Welsh and English immigrants often didn't share the same language. However, they did share the same desire to reach the Rocky Mountains and live among the members of their newfound church. This was, according to historian LeRoy Hafen, "the most remarkable travel experiment in the history of Western America" (Hafen, 1960).

"Handcarts" employed by early members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints settlers were not unlike those used today by porters and peddlers in most major United States cities. Made almost exclusively of wood due to the cost of more expensive material alternatives and a limited amount of iron, hand carts could only transport a fraction of the weight that larger and more well-designed covered wagons carried. Immigrants were generally limited to only 15 to 20 lbs. each of personal belongings. The handcarts also had to carry sufficient food and clothing to complete the trip and begin their new life in Zion.

#### Handcart Days

Handcart Days is an annual July celebration held in Davis County immediately north of Salt Lake City, UT, as a remembrance of the struggle and hardship faced by the handcart pioneers as they trek to the great America West. The Handcart Day celebration originated in February of 1950 in the small northern Utah town of Bountiful.

On February 28th, 1950, two Stake Presidents from the Bountiful and South Davis Stakes, which are ecclesiastical groupings of approximately 3000 church members residing in a common geographical area, met together to organize a celebration in Utah's second oldest city, Bountiful, to commemorate the handcart pioneer experience. The celebration was to be named Handcart Days, an acknowledgment of those persons who were a part of what has been referred to by historians as the most remarkable travel experiment in the history of Western America (Hafen, 1960).

Celebrations honoring the contributions of pioneers have notably grown in size, number, and diversity since the 1st celebration in 1847, attended by less than 150 persons in downtown Great Salt Lake City to millions of participants today in various activities around the world.

The 1st Handcart Days celebration was small and consisted of only two events and less than 2500 participants. Fifty years later, the same celebration encompassed more than a dozen

annual events, and more than 125,000 participants attended the 1999 Handcart Day celebration events.

Handcart Days have served not only as a noted regional commemoration of handcart pioneer contributions but also as an answer to a practical need to create an alternative for families unable or not desiring to travel about 10 miles into Salt Lake City for the world's largest annual pioneer celebration, the Days of '47 also known as Pioneer Days.

The following decade-by-decade historical review was primarily a result of the efforts of Matthew D. Hanson and Brad Cowley, University of Utah students representing two of the nearly 5000 volunteers who contribute their time and talents annually to the Handcart Day celebration. Matt and Brad spent time and effort researching past Handcart Day celebration events through a historical record found largely through the archives of Davis County Clipper and the Deseret News. Matt and Brad are also two of more than a dozen Local Legacy Project Committee members who are responsible for the report and materials that constitute our package for the US Library of Congress."

#### The First Decade, 1950 through 1959

Oral history and cursory notes from a 1952 Handcart days committee meeting identify the time of Handcart Day's origin to be the end of February 1950, specifically February 28th. According to available information, two Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Bountiful and South Davis Stakes, decided to combine their individual Pioneer Day festivities into a celebration for the whole community. Prior to 1950, celebration activities for Pioneer Day on July 24th had been less formally organized by neighborhood Wards, (which are smaller ecclesiastical units of about 500 members that, when combined, form Stakes) and an occasional Stake activity. Families and individuals wanting the flavor of a large city celebration would usually drive into Salt Lake City for the famed Days of 47 Celebrations.

By 1952 and 1953, the Handcart Days celebration was well enough established that residents were encouraged to "Stay at home, Be at home" to enjoy the July 24th celebration. The motto "Stay at home, Be at home" acknowledges that many residents had previously depended upon Salt Lake City's Days of '47 celebrations for their entertainment and participation. "Staying at home" meant that thousands of people were being encouraged to forego the 12-mile car ride south to join their neighbors to commemorate the state holiday.

Events of the 1952 celebration included the Grand Parade, a bake sale, a pet show, food and games concessions, a baseball game between Bountiful and South Davis State, and a pioneer "old folks" program including cowboy poetry, music, and yodeling. By 1953, the Handcart Days grand parade involve 13 wards and several local business sponsors as well totaling a mammoth parade with 50 to 60 entries, the largest parade in the 50s decade in Bountiful. The 1953 celebration also witnessed the first official Handcart Days celebration theme, "Old Folks". Themes throughout the remainder of the decade took on more of a religious orientation, including the "Faith of our Fathers," "This is Still the Place!" and "This is Our Story."

The more prominent activities of the decade included the Grand Parade, the primary children's parade, food concessions and games, candy scramble for children, water shows of swimming and diving, varieties show, pet show, pageants, handicraft show, and sell, and athletic strength ability contests.

The 2nd decade, 1960 through 1969

The Grand Parade was probably the primary, if not the most visible recipient of the celebration's growth during the decade. The 1960 parade had only 28 entries. By 1969, the parade boasted 113 entries, which was a competitive size to the fame Days of '47 parade.

The Grand Parades of the 1960s were also characterized by a growing diversity of themes, entries, and formats. In 1962, the parade was a reenactment of the parade of 1857, 105 years earlier, which was the first known parade in Bountiful City and all of South Davis County. Prominent 1857 parade historical figures like leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Lorenzo Snow and Heber C Kimball, as well as explorer and trappers Peter Skeine Ogden and Jim Bridger. By 1963, the Grand Parade included ten dancing Native Americans in native costumes and the renowned Salt Lake Scotts Bagpipe Band. With the disbanding of the Handcart Days children's parade during the 1960s, children were now invited to participate in the Grand Parade. Junior and Senior High School bands began to march and play in the parade in the mid-1960s and have continued to play a prominent role to the present day.

Handcart Days experience other changes and notable occurrences in the 1960s in addition to those affecting the Grand Parade. Sporting and related field events became very visible and diverse in competition. Softball games and swimming competition was joined by model airplane flying, go-kart racing, foot races, tug-of-war contests, and even greased pig chasing as a sample of these unique new events. Other prominent activities of the decade celebrations in addition to those previously identified include 1. A variety talent show. 2. Chess and checkers tournament 3. Carnival rides 4. Firefighting demonstration 5. Water show 6. Water fight at the Bountiful Park 7. An array of pageants, plays, musicals, 8. Fireworks displays, 9. Tennis tournaments, 10. horseshoe pitching contests, 11. food and games, concessions, 12. Polynesian night food and dancing, 13. Chuckwagon breakfasts.

During the decade, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints continued to provide the primary financial support to help administer and advertise the celebration. Most of the proceeds from revenue-producing events went to buy the land for and to develop Camp Piuta Girl's Camp.

Among the more prominent and remembered Handcart Days celebration themes of the decade were "The First 20 Years of the church," "Let Freedom Ring," "Pioneer Ideals", and "From Railways to Spaceways."

The 3rd Decade 1970 through 1979

The format through the 1960s had been to conduct all activities and events on July 23rd and 24th, avoiding direct competition with the Days of '47 Parade. During the 1970s, the two-day format was dropped with the advent of a regularly held pioneer-theme fireside and an amateur art show. A fireside sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and open to the general public, it became a regularly featured event in the 1970s and continues today. An amateur art exhibition also began as an opportunity for local non-professional artists to display their talents in multiple art forms.

Because of an unfortunate accident during a fireworks display, a delayed firework shell exploded before the family of the former Bountiful Mayor, causing injuries; the fireworks event disappeared during the 1970s.

Despite the temporary loss of the fireworks display, events that constituted Handcart Days continued to grow and reflect the day's culture, traditions, and popular activities. Some of the more notable events now included: 1. Grand Parade 2. 10-kilometer race 3. Food, games, and rides concessions 4. Water show 5. Historical tour of Bountiful 6. Skydiving exhibition 7. Softball tournament 8. Gymnastics demonstration 9. Musical events 10. Pageants 11. Band competition 12. Antique car show 13. Chuck wagon breakfast 14. Field event races and competitions.

The 1970s experienced a continued administrative partnership between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Bountiful City, community, and commercial groups. The primary leadership and fiduciary responsibility was that of the church leadership, although all local community sectors were again encouraged to join the festivities.

The themes of the celebration continued along pioneering topics such as "Pioneering the Seventies" and "Pioneers and Patriots."

#### The 4th Decade, 1980 through 1989

Thirty years into celebrating the handcart pioneer experience, the decade of the 1980s brought a concerted effort to make handcart days "bigger and better." Addressing the challenge of making the celebration "bigger and better" required additional financial and human resources and increased sophistication regarding public relations, logistics, transportation, and recreation. The steering committee became the executive committee. Additional volunteers in the community were called upon to assist with the number of very variety of events. Several fundraising events were added to the celebrations to help make Handcart Days more self-sustaining.

Because of the historical involvement in the celebration, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was predictably the best source for needed volunteer and financial labor. In a 1988 letter from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Area Presidency, it was requested that all 14 Stakes support the celebration and that all funding from the celebration be redirected towards paying for celebration activities in future years.

During the 1980s, several innovations were added to various activities while other events grew in popularity and participation. In 1989, one such new edition was a performance stage created for use in Bountiful Park for an ensemble of live entertainment. The performers who played,

sang, and danced on the stage added flavor and excitement to the traditional food and game concessions. To the delight of those in attendance, entertainment also expanded to include musical bands that played as they wandered through the 10-acre park.

Other notable celebration events of the decade included: 1. Grand Parade 2. Fireside 3. Chuck Wagon Breakfast 4. Mountain man demonstrations 5. Soccer tournament 6. Skydiving exhibition 7. Horseshoe pitching competition 8. Dance Festival 9. History tour of Bountiful 10. Antique Car Show 11. An array of musicals and plays 12. Free family swimming 13. Amateur art exhibits 14. Softball tournaments.

The 5th decade, 1990 through 1999

Handcart Days are financially administered under the religious non-profit organizational tax status of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [501 (c)(3) IRS]. Accordingly, each year's celebration until early 1990 was underwritten financially by the participating Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Stakes and Wards that participated in Handcart Days. Most of the previous decade's celebrations have been self-sustaining to cover the year's expenses; however, there were exceptions.

As the 5th decade of celebrations began, there was a growing concern among Handcart Day's leadership in ensuring the financial stability of future celebrations. Once or twice every decade, rain and inclement weather, including a late July snowstorm in 1955 with 30 inches more snow, required financial support from local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Stakes to ensure solvency. Serious consideration was given to models of financial stability that could prevent anxious moments and celebration fragility.

Throughout the 1980s, the Handcart Days celebration experienced increased involvement, guidance, and resources from Bountiful City government and commercial business groups. By the end of the 1980s the celebration leadership and direction was determined as a "partnership" of near equal efforts and resources. The partnership was comfortable for all parties until the early 1990s.

In the early 1990s, the celebration had significantly grown in size and dimension. An estimated 40,000 to 50,000 people participated in one or more of the annual celebration events. Bountiful City, as a primary sponsor of events, became increasingly concerned about the human and financial resources that were now required and would likely be required as the community and celebration continued to grow. There was also a growing concern about the growing legal liabilities that follow large recreational events.

Bountiful City and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reached an agreement that the church would once again take the primary financial and human resource responsibilities. Bountiful City would participate by providing auxiliary support services like communication, police protection, crowd control, paramedic assistance, etc., and would sponsor recreational and fireworks support. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would be primarily responsible for all other activities, necessary resources, and support

services. The model that emerged from this unique cooperative effort between the government, church, and business has been both highly successful and comfortable. The relationship has since remained constant and grown in a cooperative spirit and intent into the new millennium.

The 1998 Handcart Days committee, under the direction of the Utah North Area Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Handcart Days chairman Dr. M David Hansen, a series of initiatives were approved for implementation by the Handcart Days Committee. The most important of these initiatives was a confirmation that through the 2002 celebration, Handcart Days would remain a “community-based” celebration rather than attempt to heavily expand and involve resources and attention similar to those of the Salt Lake Days of ‘47 celebration and its competing events. Handcart Days would continue to serve its initial purpose: "To provide alternative Pioneer Days (24th of July) activities for the families of Southern Davis County," not in competition with but in harmony with other celebration activities of other local communities.

Also, expansion of the celebration in 1999 to the year 2002 would include planned growth to 29 Stakes and 240 Wards and Branches of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints covering the entire southern half of Davis County including Bountiful, Centerville, Farmington, Fruit Heights, Kaysville, North Salt Lake, West Bountiful, and Woods Cross. Each community would be invited to take a celebration event other than the Grand Parade in downtown Bountiful or add a new celebration event to be held in the local community and administered by the local Stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Handcart Days would be expected to remain self-sustaining financially so that each year's celebration events would be expected to cover all expenses of the year in which they were held and provide seed money to begin the celebration for the following year.

As the initiatives of 1998 began to be implemented, Handcart Days ‘99 remarkably experienced phenomenal growth, including 1. The largest Grand Parade in the celebration's history, with an estimated 75,000 spectators lining the parade route in downtown Bountiful. The largest crowd was treated to the largest number of parade entries, numbering over 120. By the late 1990s, the National Parade Association listed the Grand Parade as one of America's 17th largest parades, along with the Days of ‘47 Parade at #3 and the Provo Freedom Festival at #11.

The re-emphasis upon pioneer heritage and handcart pioneers, especially in the 1990s, was reflected in the themes that were selected for the celebrations, such as: “Pioneering Into The Next Century,” “Faith in Every Footstep,” and “The Pioneering Spirit – A Family Tradition.”

In addition to the Grand Parade, Handcart Day celebrations of the 1990s continued many of the traditions of the past yet reintroduced and began new events as well: 1. Fireside 2. Clown College 3. Chuck wagon breakfast 4. Free event shuttle bus transportation 5. Art exhibit and competition 6. Horseshoes pitching competition 7. Dance festival 8. Historical Tours of Bountiful

9. Variety talent show 10. Arrays of musicals and plays 11. Free family swimming and ice skating 12. Concession food, games, rides.

As the new residents of Great Salt Lake City watched the first Pioneer Dear Pioneer Day parade in 1849, it lasted almost 30 minutes and consisted mainly of men and boys on horses and marching women. Could any of them have envisioned the fanfare of future resulting celebrations? Indeed, many early pioneers would have been honored to know that their cause would result in the desert and their children's future "blossoming as a rose" and deserving the remembrance of so many generations to follow.

The purpose of Handcart Days is to remember, celebrate, and encourage the contributions and sacrifices of pioneers in the past, at present, and in the future. As stated by the Handcart Days committee.

In 2023, the following was added to the Handcart Days, "Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future." Handcart Days is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the pioneer spirit that lives in all of us, regardless of our backgrounds and journeys.

Reference:

Hafen, LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen. Handcarts to Zion : the story of a unique western migration 1856-1860, with contemporary journals, accounts, reports, and rosters of members of the ten handcart companies. Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, 1960, 1976. FS Library 289.309 H119h

Some of the first 50 year Themes:

1. "Old Folks"
2. "The First 20 Years of the Church"
3. "Let Freedom Ring"
4. "Pioneer Ideals"
5. "From Railways to Spaceways"
6. "Pioneering the Seventies"
7. "Pioneers and Patriots"
8. "Pioneering Into The Next Century"
9. "Faith in Every Footstep"
10. "The Pioneering Spirit – A Family Tradition"

Some of the events of the first 50 years:

1. Grand Parade
2. Bake sale
3. Pet show
4. Food and games concessions
5. Baseball game

6. "Old Folks" program
7. Native American dancing
8. Salt Lake Scotts Bagpipe Band
9. Children's parade
10. Junior and Senior High School band performances
11. Softball games
12. Swimming competitions
13. Model airplane flying
14. Go-kart racing
15. Foot races
16. Tug-of-war contests
17. Greased pig chasing
18. Variety talent show
19. Chess and checkers tournament
20. Carnival rides
21. Firefighting demonstration
22. Water show
23. Water fight at the Bountiful Park
24. Pageants
25. Plays
26. Musicals
27. Fireworks displays
28. Tennis tournaments
29. Horseshoe pitching contests
30. Polynesian night food and dancing
31. Chuckwagon breakfasts
32. Mountain man demonstrations
33. Soccer tournaments
34. Skydiving exhibitions
35. Historical tours of Bountiful
36. Antique car shows
37. Chuck wagon breakfast
38. Field event races and competitions
39. Fireside gatherings
40. Clown College
41. Free event shuttle bus transportation
42. Art exhibit and competition
43. Horseshoe pitching competition
44. Dance festival
45. Variety talent show
46. Musical performances
47. Pageants
48. Free family swimming and ice skating
49. Concession food, games, rides



## Handcart Days Summary (Small)

<b>Handcart Company</b>	<b>Captain</b>	<b>Left Florence</b>	<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Died en route</b>	<b>Arrived Salt Lake City</b>
<b><u>First</u></b>	Edmund Ellsworth	20 Jul 1856	274	13	26 Sep 1856
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<b><u>Fifth/Martin</u></b>	Edward Martin	27 Aug 1856	576	>145	30 Nov 1856
<b><u>Sixth</u></b>	Israel Evans	20 Jun 1857	149	(0)	11 Sep 1857
<b><u>Seventh Scandinavian</u></b>	Christian Christiansen	15 Jul 1857	~330	~6	13 Sep 1857
<b><u>Eighth</u></b>	George Rowley	9 Jun 1859	235	~5	4 Sep 1859
<b><u>Ninth</u></b>	Daniel Robison	6 Jun 1860	233	1	27 Aug 1860
<b><u>Tenth</u></b>	Oscar O. Stoddard	6 Jul 1860	124	0	24 Sep 1860

Handcart Days commemorates the remarkable journey of pioneers from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who migrated to the Great Salt Lake Valley, led by Brigham Young, in 1847. The pioneers faced persecution and challenges, culminating in handcart transportation between 1856 and 1860 when nearly 3,000 emigrants traveled over 1,000 miles to Utah. These pioneers hailed from diverse backgrounds and shared a common desire to settle in their new homeland.

Handcart Days originated in 1950 in Bountiful, Utah, as a celebration organized by two Stake Presidents. It has since grown into an annual July event in Davis County, commemorating the resilience and sacrifice of the handcart pioneers. The celebration has evolved over the years, attracting millions of participants globally, with more than 125,000 attendees in 1999.

Handcart Days serves as both a regional commemoration and an alternative celebration for families unable to attend the larger Days of '47 Pioneer Days in Salt Lake City. Its history has been meticulously researched by volunteers, including University of Utah students, who have contributed to preserving the legacy of the handcart pioneers through archives and historical records.

### The 1950's

The origins of Handcart Days can be traced back to February 28th, 1950, when two Stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Bountiful and South Davis Stakes, decided to merge their Pioneer Day festivities into a community-wide celebration. Before 1950, neighborhood Wards organized Pioneer Day activities on a smaller scale, with some residents traveling to Salt Lake City for the Days of '47 celebrations.

By 1952 and 1953, Handcart Days had become a well-established tradition, encouraging residents to "Stay at home, Be at home" and participate in the local celebration rather than traveling to Salt Lake City. The festivities included a Grand Parade, bake sales, pet shows, food and games concessions, and pioneer-themed programs featuring cowboy poetry, music, and yodeling. In 1953, the celebration witnessed the introduction of an official theme, "Old Folks," and featured a grand parade with 50 to 60 entries, making it the largest parade of the decade in Bountiful.

#### The 1960's

During the 1960s, Handcart Days in Bountiful experienced significant growth and diversification, with the Grand Parade as a prominent celebration aspect. The decade witnessed a remarkable increase in parade entries, growing from 28 in 1960 to 113 by 1969, making it comparable in size to the renowned Days of '47 parade.

The Grand Parade of the 1960s showcased a wide array of themes, entries, and formats. In 1962, the parade recreated the historic procession of 1857, featuring notable figures like Church leaders Lorenzo Snow and Heber C Kimball and explorers Peter Skene Ogden and Jim Bridger. Including diverse elements such as Native American dancers and the Salt Lake Scotts Bagpipe Band added to the parade's richness.

The decade also saw a proliferation of sporting and field events, ranging from softball games and swimming competitions to model airplane flying and greased pig chasing. Other activities included talent shows, chess tournaments, carnival rides, firefighting demonstrations, water shows, and Polynesian food and dancing nights.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints remained a key supporter of Handcart Days, contributing to its administration and promotion. Proceeds from revenue-generating events often went towards acquiring and developing Camp Piuta Girl's Camp.

Notable themes of Handcart Days during the 1960s reflected the spirit of the times, such as "The First 20 Years of the church," "Let Freedom Ring," "Pioneer Ideals," and "From Railways to Spaceways." The decade marked a period of growth, diversity, and community celebration in Bountiful.

#### The 1970's

During the 1970s, Handcart Days in Bountiful underwent several changes in format and events. Previously held over two days to avoid clashing with the Days of '47 Parade, the celebration now incorporated a pioneer-themed fireside and an amateur art show into its schedule. Sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the fireside became a regular feature and remains so today. The amateur art exhibition provided a platform for local non-professional artists to showcase their talents.

Following an unfortunate accident during a fireworks display that caused injuries to the family of a former Bountiful Mayor, the fireworks event was discontinued in the 1970s. However, despite this setback, Handcart Days continued to expand with various events

reflecting the era's culture, traditions, and popular activities. Notable events included the Grand Parade, a 10-kilometer race, concessions offering food, games, and rides, water shows, historical tours, skydiving exhibitions, softball tournaments, gymnastics demonstrations, musical performances, pageants, band competitions, antique car shows, chuck wagon breakfasts, and various field events and races.

Administratively, the 1970s saw continued collaboration between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Bountiful City, and local community and commercial groups. While the church provided primary leadership and financial support, all community sectors were encouraged to participate in the festivities. The celebration themes of the decade reflected pioneering ideals, such as "Pioneering the Seventies" and "Pioneers and Patriots."

### The 1980's

In the 1980s, Handcart Days in Bountiful underwent significant efforts to enhance its scale and quality, aiming to make the celebration "bigger and better." This endeavor necessitated increased financial resources, volunteer involvement, and logistics, transportation, and public relations improvements. The steering committee evolved into an executive committee, and additional community volunteers were enlisted to support various events. Fundraising initiatives were introduced to bolster the sustainability of Handcart Days.

Given its historical association with the celebration, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints remained a vital volunteer and financial support source. A 1988 directive from the Church's Area Presidency urged all 14 Stakes to contribute to the celebration and directed that celebration funds be reinvested into future activities.

Throughout the 1980s, various innovations enhanced existing events, while new additions like a performance stage in Bountiful Park brought live entertainment to attendees. The decade witnessed the expansion of entertainment offerings, including musical bands performing throughout the park, enriching the traditional food and game concessions.

Notable events of Handcart Days during the 1980s included the Grand Parade, Fireside gatherings, Chuck Wagon Breakfasts, Mountain Man demonstrations, soccer tournaments, skydiving exhibitions, horseshoe pitching competitions, dance festivals, historical tours, antique car shows, musicals, plays, free family swimming, and amateur art exhibits. These activities reflected the community's commitment to honoring its pioneer heritage while embracing contemporary forms of celebration and entertainment.

### The 1990's

During the 1990s, Handcart Days in Bountiful experienced significant changes in its administration and financial structure. Previously overseen by the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Stakes and Wards, the celebration became financially administered by operating under a nonprofit status. Concerns about financial stability arose, prompting a partnership between Bountiful City and the non-profit "Bountiful Handcart Days" organization to manage resources and liabilities effectively.

With the celebration growing in size and complexity, attracting 40,000 to 50,000 participants annually, Bountiful City became increasingly involved in providing support services such as communication, police protection, and paramedic assistance. The Church assumed primary responsibility for organizing events and allocating resources. This cooperative model ensured the smooth operation of Handcart Days while mitigating legal liabilities.

In 1998, the committee approved initiatives to maintain Handcart Days as a community-based celebration, distinct from larger events like the Days of '47. The celebration expanded to include 29 Stakes and 240 Wards and Branches of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints across southern Davis County, including Bountiful, Centerville, Farmington, Fruit Heights, Kaysville, North Salt Lake, West Bountiful, and Woods Cross. Each community was encouraged to host local events administered by local Stakes.

Handcart Days remained financially self-sustaining, covering expenses for each year's celebration and providing seed money for the following year. The 1999 celebration saw remarkable growth, including the largest Grand Parade in its history with over 120 entries and an estimated 75,000 spectators. Themes of the 1990s reflected a renewed emphasis on pioneer heritage, such as "Pioneering Into The Next Century" and "Faith in Every Footstep."

Events during the 1990s continued traditional activities while introducing new ones like Clown College, free event shuttle bus transportation, art exhibits, horseshoe pitching competitions, dance festivals, historical tours, variety talent shows, musicals, plays, and free family swimming and ice skating. Handcart Days remained a vibrant celebration of community spirit and pioneer heritage throughout the decade.

Handcart Days commemorate the legacy of pioneer contributions and sacrifices, reflecting on the past, present, and future. The celebration pays tribute to the resilience and determination of early pioneers whose efforts transformed the Great Salt Lake City and paved the way for future generations. From its humble beginnings, Handcart Days has evolved into a vibrant celebration, symbolizing the pioneer spirit inherent in all individuals, irrespective of their backgrounds or journeys. With the theme "Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future," Handcart Days serves as a poignant reminder of the remarkable journey undertaken by pioneers and inspires continued reverence for their enduring legacy.

Some of the first 50 year Themes:

1. "Old Folks"
2. "The First 20 Years of the Church"
3. "Let Freedom Ring"
4. "Pioneer Ideals"
5. "From Railways to Spaceways"
6. "Pioneering the Seventies"
7. "Pioneers and Patriots"

8. "Pioneering Into The Next Century"
9. "Faith in Every Footstep"
10. "The Pioneering Spirit – A Family Tradition"

Some of the events of the first 50 years:

1. Grand Parade
2. Bake sale
3. Pet show
4. Food and games concessions
5. Baseball game
6. "Old Folks" program
7. Native American dancing
8. Salt Lake Scotts Bagpipe Band
9. Children's parade
10. Junior and Senior High School band performances
11. Softball games
12. Swimming competitions
13. Model airplane flying
14. Go-kart racing
15. Foot races
16. Tug-of-war contests
17. Greased pig chasing
18. Variety talent show
19. Chess and checkers tournament
20. Carnival rides
21. Firefighting demonstration
22. Water show
23. Water fight at the Bountiful Park
24. Pageants
25. Plays
26. Musicals
27. Fireworks displays
28. Tennis tournaments
29. Horseshoe pitching contests
30. Polynesian night food and dancing
31. Chuckwagon breakfasts
32. Mountain man demonstrations
33. Soccer tournaments
34. Skydiving exhibitions
35. Historical tours of Bountiful
36. Antique car shows
37. Chuck wagon breakfast
38. Field event races and competitions

39. Fireside gatherings
40. Clown College
41. Free event shuttle bus transportation
42. Art exhibit and competition
43. Horseshoe pitching competition
44. Dance festival
45. Variety talent show
46. Musical performances
47. Pageants
48. Free family swimming and ice skating
49. Concession food, games, rides