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Hole In The Rock Journey

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This is a really good essay. It teaches us about an important event in our area history and also to be kind to people even if they are not the same as us and to always take care of and work with one another. Good job!!

In 1879 a group of 250 men, women, and children along with 80 wagons traveled 200 miles to settle in San Juan. The trip was supposed to take 6 weeks, but it took almost 6 months. They had to make roads for the wagons as they went. It is called the Hole in the Rock because they had to cut a hole in the rock just big enough for the wagons to fit.

Henry John Holyoak Jr, my Great Great Grandpa was my age on the journey, they even left on his 9th birthday. He was born in Iron County, Paragonah, Utah on October 29, 1870. He was the second child of Henry John Holyoak and Sarah Ann Robinson. Henry John and his older sister were in charge of driving 100 cattle, a yoke of oxen, and a few horses. The journey took all winter and Henry frosted his feet crossing the mountain. Henry had to melt snow to drink water, and to water the teams of animals. When they crossed the Colorado river, which was called the Grand river at the time, they had to cut the ice for the boats to go thru. Henry rode in a boat with the oxen as they crossed, but something scary happened. One of the oxen was mean, so they yoked it to another oxen and chained it to the wagon wheel. The oxen got wild and broke the chain, then it dove at Henry, he dropped to the bottom of the boat, and the oxen jumped right over the top of him and into the water. They had to cut more ice to get the oxen to shore.

Henry's Mom Sarah drove her own wagon on the journey. It was a pretty fancy wagon at that time because it had a bed and a stove to keep the children warm. It was also the biggest wagon, and when they went thru the hole carved in the rock they had to carve extra slots for the wagon hubs to make it thru. The roads were steep, and once their wagon even tipped over, they ended up carrying the wagon up the hill in pieces and then putting it back together. Their family also had some bees that scattered when the wagon tipped, so they had to wait for them to come back before they could go on.

The company eventually made it to their destination in Bluff. They stayed there a couple years, but the farming was bad, and they moved on to settle the city of Moab. Henry and his family liked to help people, they even became friends with the Native Americans. His Dad

would feed the Native Americans, they loved the watermelon that he would give them so much that they affectionately nicknamed him Pooats which my Grandpa says means red berry. They called Henry Pooats Papoose, meaning red berry baby. I know that Holyoaks still love to feed people today because it is one of my Grandpa Holyoak's favorite things to do.

Henry and his family went thru lots of hard things, hunger, cold, and lots of work. My life may be different than Henry's in lots of ways, but I hope I can be like him in many ways too. He was brave to take care of so many animals and help work together with his family. I have a big family and we have to work together and look out for each other too. We should all try to work hard, be brave, and be kind like my Great Great Grandpa Henry John Holyoak.



Artist drawing - Henry John Holyoak & wife at wedding

Information was taken from the History of Henry John Holyoak written by himself and found in "Holyoaks From Kings Norton to the Everlasting Hills."