

**Sarah and Henry Holyoak**  
Journey to Bluff and Highlights of their  
Life in Bluff, Peak and Moab, Utah,  
By their son Henry John Holyoak.

**The Hole-in-the-Rock Journey:**

Henry Holyoak, with a company of others, left Iron County, September 12, 1879 on their trip for the San Juan. We went thru Bear Valley, on to the Sevier, and from there to Panguitch, then over the mountain to Potato Valley. While crossing the mountain snow fell until it was up to the axle on the wagons. I drove the loose stock and got my feet frozen. While crossing the divide my mother drove one of the wagons, with a team of horses, while my Father drove the other wagon drawn by an ox team. My mother had a young baby at that time, and the wagon that she drove was fixed so we could sleep in it at nights. She would put the baby on the bed while she drove, with the girls to watch him.

After we reached Potato Valley, we went from there to Ten Mile, there we camped until they got the road built on farther. I melted snow to use for drinking water for the entire camp also for the teams. They were working on the road. From there we moved on to the Hole in the Rock, where we spent both Christmas and New Years, to celebrate both we danced on the slick rocks. Then they got the road thru the Hole and down the hill to the river, so it was possible to get lumber down that far so they could build a boat to cross the river. (The Colorado) Then they moved down on the east side of the river.

While going thru the Hole in the Rock the wagon which my Mother drove scribed both sides on the rocks, and they thought they would have to make the hole larger in order to get the wagon thru, after much work they squeezed it thru. They had to drive up to the hole, then push on the wagons, against the horses to start them thru, they if had to tie ropes to the axle to hold on, to steady the wagon until they could fix brakes so they could go on down the hill, as it was so steep. This was the only way we had to go on. After we got down there we found the hill on the east was also very steep, and the chain that was on the wagon which the oxen were pulling, broke, and let the wagon slip over, which sent the tongue straight up in the air, and when the wagon stopped the tongue was down the hill. While we were at the next camp, which they called cheese Camp, a load of supplies came, also a load of cheese, from Bear Valley.

Silas Smith had been the leader of the company as far as the Hole in the Rock, and from here went back to Salt Lake 'to the Legislature. From here Platte Lyman led the company on to the San Juan.

**From Bluff to Peak:**

We spent the entire winter on the road, reaching the San Juan in April. Soon after our arrival we took out a ditch from the river and got our crop in, when the river came up and took the ditch and all the crop we had planted. From this point we moved up the river to a place they called Peak. While we were there, we started another camp, and made a water wheel, and began to plant crops again.

We got things looking quite favorable when the river came up, took our wheel out, and landed on the side. We succeeded in getting one house built while we were there, this being the first house we had had since we left Red Creek Iron County. We were working to enlarge the house when some Indians came along and tied their horses down in the brush.

### **Indian conflict resolved over stolen horses:**

I told the Indians that were working with us that one of those horses was mine that we had lost it while in Bluff. So I jumped down and went down there. They were tied and took the one that had been mine while in Bluff. At seeing me on this horse one old squaw became angry, which caused her to pull my hair fiercely. I told her that it was my horse and she could not have her, but I would let her have another one to go the camp with. The next day they came back all painted up and said they wanted the horse or they would kill us all. Things looked rather difficult for us for a while when finally the man that owned the squaw found out that it was Henry Holyoak's boy who took the horse, he said he had bought it from some other Indian for five dollars. Father gave him some flour and they smoked the pipe of peace. This was the first time I had ever seen my Father smoke. They said for him to bring the mare in the morning down to the river and they would prove to him that they had bought her. So my Father led the mare down to the river and they left. They said to take the mare back to his "Papoose". The folks who lived there left, so we had to go down the river to another place. We built a house cut of logs and started to fix another wheel, we were alone here but there were some other folks living down the river a few miles. While we lived here father had to leave us alone to go after flour, he had three yoke of oxen and a horse team, he worked the oxen up as far as Durango, Colorado, sold them and loaded the horses, as well as the wagon, with flour and other necessary food-stuffs. It seemed that he was gone a long time, for he had to go 130 miles to get supplies.

The Indians frequently came over where we lived and asked us where Father was, we would tell them he went to Durango after flour, They said "All right, when he gets back we get flour." For he often fed them. They also said, "He our friend, you our friends, also."

### **Negotiations with the Indians following a deadly incident at a trading post:**

While we lived there a certain man built a trading store to trade with the Indians. They brought blankets to trade for flour. One day two Indians came and pawned some blankets for sugar and flour and said that they would be back later with the money to pay for the goods and get their blankets. When they came back the man at the store refused to let them have their blankets, this resulted in a fight in which one white man was killed, one Indian was also killed and another one wounded. The Indians came down and told us to stay there and they would

not harm us. They also told us that there may be a big fight up there, and for my Father to tell all his friends but they would be safe if they would stay with us.

They said the man at the trading post was crazy and no good. That he was trying to drive them away from here. The Indians came over every day to see us and tell us that there was likely to be a big fight up there.

The soldiers came down from Colorado, and the cowboys came from the mountain. When they learned from the cowboys we were seven miles below, the soldiers came and wanted us to come up where they could protect us, but Father said he was not afraid of the Indians, we were safe where we were and he told them what they had said about staying here, if he had any friends to let them stay with him. They said, "We heap know you and all your friends, your friends are our friends too." The soldiers knew from this that there was something wrong if the Indians were not on the warpath with all the whites. So they asked Father to go talk to them and ask them to come meet some of the soldiers at his place and see if this trouble could be settled without fighting. So when the Indians came over the river they asked what was the big talk of the soldiers, as they had been watching and had seen them enter my father's house. My Father told them and asked if some of the Indians would come to his place and there talk it over with the soldiers and try to settle this difficulty. The Indians told Father that if the soldiers were his friends three of them would meet three soldiers (three, no more). So three from each party came and stayed all day...My mother cooked dinner for them which they all ate together, then they ate watermelon.

The soldiers said they would be back in the morning with the blankets for the Indians, providing they (the Indians) were there with the money to pay for the goods for which they had pawned the blankets. The Indians decide then that they wanted pay for the one that had been killed at the Trading Post, they also stated that it was thru the actions of the man there that the row had started. The soldiers assured them that the government would pay them flour and other foodstuffs for the dead Indian, then the Indians said if the government didn't pay that they would kill the man at the Trading Post as pay. They told my Father where they would fight, It was at a very narrow place, where one Indian could kill a hundred soldiers before any of them could get thru.

### **River Washed out the Peak Settlement:**

The river later washed that place away, as well as the bottom where we were farming, which made it necessary for us to move again. We moved on down the river to a place where John Allan lived, it was at his home that we spent the winter. In the spring we moved further down the river to Montezuma Creek, where Mr. Hearmond [Harriman] lived, he was also one so we helped him build a water wheel, there was a vacant house there so we moved into it. In a very short

time the river came up and took the wheel and changed the channel, taking the corn that we had planted. All we had left was the watermelon patch.

While we were here at Montezuma Creek the Indians got together and planned to go up in the Blue Mountains and fight the cowboys. They burned the cowboys wagons, houses, and harnesses, then some of the Indians came back to Montezuma Wash and stayed with us for a while. We children were very fond of the Indians and would run to meet them whenever we saw them coming. Shortly after the trouble began with the Indians there were two white men came with a herd of cattle and asked Father if they could stay with him until the trouble was settled, he told them they could if they would be friendly with the Indians, to which they agreed.

### **Notable Indians, Befriended by the Holyoaks:**

The Indians who stayed at my Father's home at this time were: Poke, Posey, Mancos Jim, Henry Watermelon, Bridger Jack, Hatch Skunk, Joe Bishop, and Cowboy Charlie. They were the leaders of their gang. They quite enjoyed being with Father and helping themselves to all the watermelon they could eat. Their pet name for Father was Peoatts (Poo-ats) .

### **From San Juan to Kane Springs, and then Moab:**

We left the San Juan in October in the fall of 1884, and as we had been on the road longer than we had intended, our food supply was rather low. we broke a wheel on the wagon my mother had driven from Red Creek, Iron County, which caused us considerable hindrance, We had lived principally in this wagon for four years. While we were at Kane Springs it was my duty to kill rabbits for food until Father got back with a supply of food. We reached Moab, in November of that year, and as there was no flour available we were in very unfavorable circumstances for a while, one day Father met a man whose name was O. W. Warner. Father asked him about flour. He said he didn't know where we could get any. After some time he said he had a sack of wheat he had ground for pig feed that he could spare. For some time we ate that just as it was, bran and all, because we had no strainer nor sieve to separate the coarse from the fine. After the straws were picked out it still looked so coarse that sometimes we made out a meal of nothing but rabbit. when we could we obtain a sieve and strained the fine out of the pig feed. As soon as we could we got some corn ground and some wheat washed to get the smut out. We used this until Father could go to Castle Dale after flour. It took two weeks to make this trip. The price of flour was \$5.00 (five dollars) per hundred. When he returned from Castle Dale he bought a place, for which he traded nine cows and ten steers. On this lot was a log house and a willow corral, but we could not take possession of the place until the time was up for which this man had leased the place. We lived in the tent until Christmas. After Christmas we moved into our house, which had only dirt floor, our bedstead was only two trestles across which boards were placed, and this we lived until we

could do better. None of the settlers here had any too much for food but they had a pair of millstones to grind their corn and wheat, it was not a paying proposition, There was not enough trade to pay to hire a man to run it. So my Father, Henry Holyoak, bought the mill so the poor class of people could have what food they needed. He paid twenty five head of cows for the mill. He ran the mill and sawed lumber, so we finally got a floor in our house. He told different folks to go to the mountain too and get logs and he would saw them up, They brought the logs, and when they had enough to saw they didn't pay, thus it went. The creek came up and took the mill, so Father was the loser again.

Upon different occasions my Father killed a beef and divided it among the poor, as he was always interested in the poor. One day I saw a woman plowing her place in preparation to plant a crop. Upon returning home I mentioned it to my Father, so the next day he sent me, and also a man who was staying with us, up to do her plowing. On our way up there, we met some men who wanted to know where we were going with the plows. I told them, and they said they would send their teams up too, and they did. They said if Henry Holyoak could help the poor and unfortunate that they could too.

Shortly after our arrival in Moab, Father went back to Saint George, and brought a sorghum mill back, so we could raise cane and make molasses. This being all the sweets we had for some time. After they got the mill to running they took molasses out to neighboring settlements and traded it for flour and other foodstuffs. These are just a few of the hardships which we passed thru in the early days of the settlement of this country.

It was plainly seen that we would have to wait for fall before we could ford either one of the two rivers as the water was up so high. Both of these rivers I have crossed many times. Sometimes the water was up to the axle on the wagon and sometimes it was deep enough to get inside the wagon box, During these days we surely saw hard times.

Whenever the early settlers of Moab wanted to dance they came and asked my mother if they could use her house for a dance hall. To which she willing consented if they would come and help take the furniture out and bring it back in after the dance. This was the social life carried out until better circumstances could be obtained.

A little later on a crowd of the settlers met to discuss the problem of building a church house. They drew some plans, making some specifications and estimating roughly the cost of the building. They decided they could a not build for some time, but the Bishop, having more faith, said they could build it right away if they would all work unitedly. Some could take teams, go to the mountain, get logs, some could haul rock, while others were making adobes and laying

them up. The people agreed to this, reminding the Bishop that the nails and shingles would take money. He assured them that when these were needed that they would be there. There was also a man in the locality who could build it alone if they did not wish to help, but he thought they all should help a little. He told them that if some of them had no team, he would get them one to help haul logs. They asked where he got the teams, to which he replied, "Go up to Henry Holyoak's, tell him you are going to the Mountain after logs for the new church house, and he will furnish you a team, this they did. When they got the team, Father always asked if they had enough "grub" to take along. If not he gave them liberally of something to eat.

My Father, Henry Holyoak, was always at the head of building the public buildings, in Moab, as well as roads which required donations, work, and for years he served as foreman in the making of these roads.

For some time he served as a counselor to Bishop Stewart. He was in favor of the county paying for the books for the school children. My Father furnished a horse and the money for a man to canvas the county to see if the people as a majority were in favor of raising the taxes so all the poor children could have books to go to school, as there were some families who could not buy books to send their children to school. It was his desire that all the children should have equal rights in school. He had no opportunities to go to school himself, therefore did all he could to help e others obtain an education. He was a pusher in everything that went on with which he had anything to do.

### **Friend to roughen cowboys, Indians and troubled youth:**

Even the roughest of the cowboys had respect for my Father. Sometimes it was their custom to come in town drunk, shoot-up the town and shoot the lights out while they were dancing. Many times I have known them to come to my father's house and ask if they could have a party at his place. He always told them yes, if they would refrain from drinking and shooting while on his premises. Whenever they asked how much he wanted for them using his house he just replied, "Good behavior", as he wanted them to have a good time while they were there. They always did as they promised in regards to fighting and drinking, as they said he was a man of his word to them. A man walked up to me the other day, slapped me on the shoulder and said, "Your old dad was one of the best men on earth.

The Indians found out where he was one fall when they came thru Moab en route to Uintah, and came to see Father. He put their horses in the pasture and gave them some squash, corn, molasses, and some flour. They cooked their supper, then began to dance, and kept it up all night, as they had found an old friend again. There were about thirty in all. I hitched the team and went to town and got some boys and girls to watch them dance. They had a coal oil can and a

shoe for their music. They always came to see Father whenever they went thru Moab, until his death. Whenever I see one of them now they say, "You Peoatts papoose." (Poo-ats)

My Father lived in this log house with homemade furniture until just a few years before his death, when he built a brick house and just got so they could have lived comfortable when my mother took sick and died. So she didn't get much good out of it. They were loved by all who knew them. Their home was a home for all. Whenever boys or girls could not get along at home, they would come stay with my parents until they could go home or got married and had a place of their own. At which time he gave them a cow and a calf. They said they thought more of them than they did their own parents, and mother was always "Grandma" Holyoak to them.

*Contributed by Geniveve Redd Holyoak*

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