Recollections of Past Days

Petree, Sandra Ailey

Published by Utah State University Press

Petree, Sandra Ailey.  
Utah State University Press, 2006.  
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/9277.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/9277

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=201198
So at last captain Thayer and his wife left for Fort Lyons and we prepared for our journey to Utah and on the eighteenth of April 1866 we left Fort Leavenworth. My husband accepted a position as Clerk to Major John L. Mcintosh to Fort Duglas Utah and we started with fine outfi t two span of Mules and one Span of fine black horses one freight wagon and carriage we was well fitted out for our Journey with plenty of provisions for the Journey.

The Morning was quite damp and chilly when we started and after we camped for night it rained so bad we staid in the carriage with me and the children. My husband threw a wagon cover over the carriage and he took shelter under that the night was cold I begged of my dear husband to come in the carriage so that he would not get wet. I told him we could all keep dry and warm but he said no that he was all right. But still I felt very anxious about him knowing how delicate his health was and before morning he caught terrible I told him that he had taken cold and it proved that he had he was one of those stout hearted men that would never give up until he was obliged too he was broken down man his constitution was gone when he returned home from the war but he never complained as long as he could get around both his Mind and body was full of activity and courage to the last before he took his final discharge from the armey he obtained a government's position in Washington he came home to Washington D.C. on the sixteenth of October 1863 having being discharged in New York the next day he reported himself at headquarters for duty as clerk. He never lost one days pay from the day he went into office in Washington untiill his death. He was one that never complained but was allways cheerful and hopeful to the last although I new he sufferd pain and weakness of body often but when I would ask him if he was not feeling well he would say I am allright an old Soldier can endure lots. Many times he had severe attacks of his heart but he never complained he was hopeful to
Recollections of Past Days

the last he kept his sickness to himself as long as he could he told Captain McClintock he new if he gave up and told me that he was sick that I would grieve and frett and perhaps get sick and would not be able to take care of our three boys.

When we arived at fort Karney Magor McClintock accompanied My husband to the Docter. when they returned to camp I ask him what the Doctor said. well he answerd me he did not say very much told me if I would consent to stay at Karney for a time he would undertake to docter me but it would not be any good for him to give me medicine and for me to continue on my journey I wanted him to stay for a few weeks and let the Doctor treat him: but to this he would not consent too he said My dear Patience we have every thing all fixed for our Journey what could we do with the horses and Muels we would have to hire Some Man to take care of them and to live in tents it would not be comfortable for you he said it will be best for us to travele on with the command so we can have protection from Indians if needed: poor dear man he did not tell me all the Doctor said to him he told him there was but very little hope for him that his lungs was in such abad condition likewise his heart was bad. he told him he would never reach Utah the Dr. told him he may live a few days but he could never arive in Utah after he and Captain McClintock left the Doctor My poor husband talked to the Captain and made him promise to See Me and the children safe home to Utah to My Mother he Said he could not talk to me himself and tell me what the Doctor told him and beged of him to tell me all after he had past away he Said in my dear wife’s condition I am afraid this sad news would be too much for her Captain promised him to tell me everything after if it was So that he died and that he would render me all the assistance I needed on the journey. and when they returned to camp after consulting with the Doctor My dear husband was quite cheerfull at least he tryed his best to be cheerfull he braved death to the last: he was in his tent settleing up his accounts as he was quarterMaster Clerk he said that he wanted to leave his book all straight: he called to Mr Obrian as she passed his tent and asked her to go and tell Mr Rozsa to hurrey and get dinner ready for he was starving hungary so she came and told that I must hurrey with my dinner for Mr Rozsa said he wanted his dinner as soon as I could get it I had all ready a large roast of beef baking but it would not be ready for an hour in a few moments he came to Me and said never mind Patience I could not wait any longer so I have got an old Soldier’s lunch and said you bett I have enjoyed it I ask him what he had been eating he said I went to the cook and ask him to give me some nice strukey bacon and bread I cut the bacon in thin slices and lay it between to sices of bread with some garlick. I ask him if he thought that was good for him he Said he thought it was Saying it made me feel good: I told him what time the dinner would
be ready he said I will go to my tent and fix up my books I told him I would send for him when dinner was ready, but when dinner was ready he sent word he did not want any that he had eaten all he needed:

[T]hat night he rested pretty good the next morning we started on our journey again after two days rest at Fort Kearny he rode with me in the carriage as he was no more able to ride horseback as he had been doing we traveled until noon then we camped again until the next morning he went to his tent and resumed his writing some men farmers came into camp with a load of hay Magor McClintock had bought for the Muls the men went to Mr. Rozsa's tent to get their pay and my dear husband said to them please wait a few moments I am feeling quite bad my breath is so short the man said you are very sick sir oh yes it seems so but it will pass of again I will attend to you in a few moments and so he did he still worked at his books and kept everything straight:

[T]hat night he had a bad night and in the morning he was unable to be up and had to lie in bed in the carriage we traveled again until noon the Doctor came to see him and told us to get him into the tent and get some hot water and put a blanket in it and, roll him in the blanket and put some oilcloth over the blanket to keep in the steam but the poor dear man could not endure it he prayed so to let him die as the wet blanket was put around him he jumped up nearly to the top of the tent he said let me lie down and die I was holding him up I thought if I let him lie down that his breath would surely cease I said no my dear Rozsa I cannot let you go don't say let you die I cannot endure that after a time he became more easy and rested some I sat by his side and slept a little we were both glad when morning came and my brother put him in the carriage again ready to travel another day not knowing if he would live through the day:

[W]e started early in the morning and camped again at noon the Doctor came again to see him he asked the Doctor to give him something to ease his pain so that he could get a little rest so the Doctor went to his tent and soon sent the steward with some medicine just before he came my husband requested me to take him into the tent and make him a bed saying I will tell you how I want my bed made. you can take the Mess chest and my writing desk then take the seat from the carriage and rest that on the chest and desk and then take the feather bed and put on that as I don't want to lie on the ground. he never would sleep on a feather bed. I was rather surprised that he should want to lie on a feather bed. he said my poor bones are so near my skin that I don't feel that I can lie on the ground any more I said all right I will fix the bed just as you wish he thanked me my dear husband was a perfect gentleman in manners he was always polite to me I never knew him to ask me for anything without saying patience will you please give me so and so whatever he ask for and what ever I did for him he always thanked me to his last breath
After he went to bed that night on the bed prepared for him just as he asked for he said that it is very nice he than said Now Patience I want you to go to bed and rest as you are tired I took a bufalo robe folded it and fixed myself abed on the ground by his side he said now dear you try and sleep he said he felt comfortable the doctor had gave him some medicine to quiet him so that he could rest about twelve o'clock at night I thought he was sleeping I got up and found him sitting up in bed I asked him why he was sitting up and helped him to lie back on his pillows I asked him how he was feeling he said thank you I am feeling better I can lie on my left side he then said I can lie on either side and I can breath quite easy I told him I was so thankful that he was feeling some better he then said I want you to lie down and rest I am all right and you need to rest all you can: I then did as he requested me and laid down again after I had rapt him up warm and told him not to try to sit up again as he would take cold:

The next time I got up I found he had stretched himself out straight and his feet was out from under the covers and quite cold I said oh my dear Rozsa why did you put your feet out of bed you surely will take cold he said he was not cold and was feeling better he then said I want you to lie down and rest I told him I would if he wished me too and he said he did as I needed rest the night seemed long and dreary to me as I was all alone in the tent all night as my children and sister in law was sleeping in the carriage and my brother and his son was sleeping in the wagon I got up again at four o'clock and he had again got his feet from under the covers and they was quite cold I rapt them up again to try to warm them and when I spoke to him and asked him how he was feeling he said thank you Patience I am better and as I looked at him he looked at me so tenderly and the tears ran from his poor eyes and he could not speak any more to me I called to my brother to come quick that my dear husband was dying and he went for the doctor and he came at once he said hello Rozsa my boy how are you this morning he answered the doctor saying thank you I am better the doctor gave him a little brandy but he spit it out of his mouth with great force and seemed quite hurt that the doctor should give him brandy I asked him if he would have a drink of water he said yes I gave him water he thanked me and smiled this was the last word he spoke the doctor said he would not last very long it was then six o'clock and the bugle sounded to strike tents the captain asked me if I would have him moved into the carriage I begged of him not to disturb him as the doctor said he he [sic] could not live long he said they would wait a little while to see if he past away but as the doctor was watching him he [sic] told the captain that he may last several hours so captain McClintock came to me and said that they would have to travel on to make there regular march he said he was sorrey to leave me with my poor
dieing husband in Such alonely place he said that in loosing My husband that he himself would loose a brother and a true friend as Mr Rozsa has been to me for along time and I have promised him that I would help you all I can this was all aranged between him and me the day I went to fort Kerney with him to the Doctor then he told him that he would not live to go to Utah . Now we will have to leave you if You dont want to have poor Rozsa Mooved untill he passes away but I dont think it is Safe for you and afew men to be left alone here as the Indians are So bad on the plains . but I will leave six Men and the Doctor with you to help you then he bid me good Morning and went on his journey with the Soldiers .

After thay had all left camp we fealt loanley we staid there about two hours and Still my dear husband was living sleeping quietly away the Doctor came to me and Said poor Rozsa is sleeping peacefullly said he was not suffering any pain he said he was geting anxious to travle on as it was unsafe for us to be left so far behind the command and he advised me to let the Men lift him bed and all just as he was on the bed he said the men can lift him right into the carrage without disturbing him he said it will not hurt Your husband at all and it will be safer for us all to be traveling on to overtake the command as soon as we can of course I realized the danger we was in to be so far away from the Men at Such troublesome times with the Indians So I gave my consent to have My dear Rozsa Mooved into the carrage and we traveled on

[W]e had not been on the road more than an hour My teemster driving the freight wagon going ahead the Men left for our guard was rideing in that wagon with my sister inlaw and my three little boys she took charge of the children that day as thay could not be with me in the carrage there was not room for them the Docter road horseback thay went over a low hill and we was in the hollow and we could not see them So we was left alone with my poor dieing husband there was a very rough looking Man came from some place we could not tell were he came from We was traveling rather Slow this Man went in front of the horses took hold of there bridels and stopt the horses and would not let my brother drive on My brother ask him to please let us go on as we had avery Sick Man told him he was dieing and we wanted to get to camp as soon as we could then the man came to the carrage and stood for amoment looking at my poor husband then he looked at me but said nothing then turning to my brother motioned for him to drive on I must Say booth my brother and myself was somewhat afraid of this terable looking fellow he was armed with two pistols and a knife in his belt when he told us to go on I told My brother to hurrey and get up the hill so that we could get closer to the wagon were the men was pretty Soon we Saw the Docter coming to look for us

[W]e traveled on for about an hour then we stopt as I could See that my dear husband was gone he Seemed to Sleep away So peacefull and
quiet without the least Struggle the Doctor came into the carriage sat by him for a few Moments then he said Your husband is dead Mrs Rozsa his sufferings are all over. He said he never doctred a man like him before in all my practise he Said I never saw a Man with such currage and keep up to the last as he has done and attend to his duties to the last day; Now he said to my brother drive on and keep up with the guard it is not safe for us to be traveling alone My husband died May 24. 1866 at one aclock in the day.

We reach camp about an hour after then Magor McClintock ordered a tent pitched to have My husband prepared to be buried he ordered some ceder planks two inches thick at the fort to make a cofen for my dear husband and he put a guard to be in the tent all night oh that terrable Loansome Night I can never forget the Doctor wanted to examine my husband after he died Magor McClintock came to me and ask me to let them do it at first I objected I told him I did not want thay Should do so he was dead and I fealt I did not want his poor body disturbed he said it would be asatesfaction to the Doctor as he could not understand the cause of his death and My brother could be present So I gave my consent for them to do it with the promise that thay did not take any part away from him: this thay agreed too. after it was all over My brother came to me and told me all about what the Docters did and thay said he never could have lived very much longer if he had not taken this last cold that one of his lungs was entirely gone and the other was nearly gone.

He was a man that never complained he was allways cheerfull so we could never tell if he was sick or not some times if I ask him if he was not feeling well he would laugh and Say I am allright old Soldiers dont complain of trifels.

After the Men had washed him and my brother had trimed his hair and whiskers and he was dressed and laid out I with my three dear little boys went to see him my dear little Frank three and half years old looked at his dear papa and said oh Why did God do that to my poor Pap so soon and burst into tears as though his little heart would break John his brother was Six years old and he did not seem to feel so bad as dear little Frank did he grieved and fretted for his father for five Months then he died he said allways after his father died that he wanted to go to his papa:

They did not burrey my husband untill the Next Morning Magor McClintock had a six foot grave dug and head boards with his name birth and date of death placed on his grave Magor McClintock said that my dear husband requested him to burey him deep down So that the Wolves could not scrach him out of his grave I ask the Magor not to have any guns fird over his grave neither did I want that the band Should play...
over him I fealt that would be to much for me to endure. my greif was so
great that I wanted to be as quiet as possable to part with my husband was
allmost more than I could endure. to be left alone with my three baby
boys to care for and raise without the help of my there dear kind father
this seemed to much for me in my condition but thank God he blessed
me and gave me Strength day by day to endure my severe trial and after
many hardships in traveling this long journey I arived home in Salt Lake
city about July 21 186613 . .