

Sand On The Way To Lund

I have a story to tell you about Uncle Rass Jones. In the spring of 1922 after my father died, Uncle Rass and Aunt Martha invited me to live with them on the farm. The shearing had been done at Iron Springs. I helped chase the sheep through the shearing pens. It then became necessary to haul the wool which was piled in 350 lb. sacks from Iron Springs to Lund because the Cedar City railroad spur had not even started.

Rass had two teams with hayrack wagons that he offered to do the job along with outfits brought by Kumen, Henry and John Heaton and maybe another, making a 6-wagon caravan.

Uncle Rass's teams were a pair of big gray geldings named Dan and Colonel, and a pair of big mares, a brown and a bay, named Old Kelly and Old Maul. Both teams were well matched. I was designated as the teamster for the mares, being then 9 years old and quite green. We drove to Iron Springs and loaded the wagons 10 or 11 sacks to a wagon. We camped until daylight next morning then headed across the desert.

About 2/3 the way across the desert, sometime in the afternoon, we joined a road coming from Enterprise. This junction was straight North of the Butte. Five or six teams from St. George had entered the road ahead of us, and as we got closer, we found that they were stuck in deep sand. One man was out there shouting and cussing his horses and beating them with the lines, but they couldn't get through.

Uncle Rass calmly unhitched Old Dan and Colonel and carried the double trees over, hooked up to them and pulled them out. He had to repeat this with every wagon that went through—all of the St. George crowd. Then John Heaton, Uncle Henry and Kumen.

Finally, there were only the two wagons left. Rass brought his team back and hooked onto his wagon. I expected that someone would bring another team and help, but he drove into the sand with only one team, Old Dan and Colonel. The sand got deeper and deeper. Well, those grays had decided that they wouldn't let Rass down for anything. They dug in with every ounce of strength they had and kept going. Pretty soon he drove out on hard ground to the shouts of all the men standing around.

I sat there waiting for him to come back and help me through or drive. He shouted come ahead. I was shaken a little that he would give me that responsibility in front of the crowd waiting on the other side, so he came over and said "Just hold the lines tight and talk to the horses. Let them know who is in charge. Don't hit them just talk and show those guys over there how to drive a team."

So, I got on the front wool sack, pulled up the lines and braced my feet against the upright on the front of the hayrack and said, "OK Kelly and Maul, go to it." Well, those two mares settled down to the hardest pulling I ever saw, and they kept going even when it seemed impossible. I kept calling them by name and tugging back on the lines. Finally, after what seemed like land eternity (probably 150 yards of deep sand) we came out on hard ground.

All of the men who had been stuck were standing there watching. They threw their hats in the air and shouted. Old Kelly and Old Maul got super treatment from me the rest of the summer. Of course, it is to Uncle Rass that any credit should go. He trained the team, told me what to do and let me do it. As far as I am concerned Uncle Rass has a place among the great people who have inhabited this earth. He was totally fearless and there was no such word as can't.

Scott Gardner