



## Stillman Pond

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I don't suppose that I'm alone when I say that – sometimes life gets pretty difficult. And I also have learned from past experience that when life seems difficult, sometimes it helps to hear about someone whose had it a little rougher than you. So with that in mind, may I share a story of a pioneer by the name of Stillman Pond?

Stillman Pond and his family were among the last to leave Nauvoo in September of 1846. Having already endured much persecution and harassment from enemies, the Pond family was ultimately driven from their home at the point of a bayonet. Without adequate preparation for their trek, they left without proper food, clothing, and shelter. Across Iowa they journeyed, and it was fraught with almost unimaginable suffering and heartache.

Snow came early to Iowa territory that year making travel even that much more difficult. Weakened from trudging through the deep snow, Stillman's pregnant wife, Maria, who had already been afflicted with consumption, then contracted malaria. She, along with every member of her family, suffered greatly from this sickness. Bowed with grief and aching from the pain and fever of malaria, Maria could no longer walk. Amidst these grim circumstances she gave birth to twin boys. They both died only a few days later. The deaths of these children coming across the plains from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters were only the beginning of the sacrifice and trials of Stillman Pond.

With all of the members of the Pond family now sick with malaria, Stillman, who was himself unable to walk or even sit up, lay on his stomach in the bed of his wagon; bracing himself with one arm and extending his other over the dashboard to hold the reins, he drove his team the last 150 miles. On the 16th of October 1846, they arrived at Winter Quarters.

# Glenn Rawson Stories

During that winter, the Pond family continued to suffer. In the space of five days, three more children died. A sixth died a few weeks later.

Laura Jane Pond, age 14, died of “chills and fever” on December 2nd, 1846.

Harriet M. Pond, age 11, died “with chills” on December the 4th.

Abigail A. Pond, age 18, “died with chills” on December the 7th.

Lyman Pond, age 6, died with “chills and fever” on January 15th, 1847.

Having survived the heartache of burying all her children, the hardships of the trek across Iowa, and the hunger and privations of a long hard winter, Stillman’s beloved wife, Marie, finally succumbed to her sickness on May 17th at Winter Quarters. Yet despite all of this, Stillman Pond journeyed onward arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in the early fall of 1847. His testimony of the Gospel, his faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, and the fire of the covenant that burned in his soul gave him the strength to go on.

My dear friends, may it be so with us.

*Leon Y. Pond and H. Ray Pond, “Stillman Pond: A Biographical Sketch,” typescript copy, LDS Historical Department, pp. 4-5*

*Brent L. Top, It Still Takes Faith, BYU Devotional Assembly, 22 July 1997, pp. 2-3*

*Glenn Rawson – July 1998*

*Music: Radcliffe’s Hymn Jason Tonioli*

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