Fire and Ice for Christmas

By Janet S. Porter

The Life and History of Phineas Wolcott Cook, Appendage 2, 3 from the writings of Carl Cook, Harriet Betsy Cook Teeples and Mary Rosalie Cook McCann.

CHARACTERS

Phineas W. Cook

Ann Eliza Howland Cook

Harriet Betsy Cook Teeples (daughter of Ann Eliza)

William Teeples (her husband)

William Cook (age 11, son of Ann Eliza)

Amanda Polly Savage Cook

David Savage Cook (Amanda's son, almost age 5)

Narrator

Narrator: In 1863 the entire Cook family was called to be part of the settlement of the Bear Lake region of northern Utah and southern Idaho. Even Ann Eliza's oldest daughter Harriet and her husband William Teeples accepted the call. Gathering their necessary goods and supplies, they traveled together through Logan to Franklin, Idaho. Turning east, they traveled through the mountains toward Paris, the little town at the northernmost tip of Bear Lake.

Phineas: We should have left much earlier. I don't understand why things take so long. I hoped to have traveled the 45 miles to Paris before this snowstorm.

William T: I don't understand either. We didn't leave Franklin until November 27. And now the snow is a foot deep. How are we going to get across this narrow dugway?

William C: Pa, look. There's a narrow pass around that mountain with a cliff at the edge. What will we do?

David: I'm afraid of that cliff. Can we go back?

Phineas: The Lord called us to go to Bear Lake, and with His help we'll make it.

David: Then I'm closing my eyes.

William T: Oh, no. The first wagon broke down. We'll have to pull it back and unload it.

Phineas: I can see right now we need to build a new boulster for it.

Harriet: That will take the rest of this day and probably another. I'm setting up camp right here in the snow so at least we can have a warm supper.

Ann Eliza: I'll scrape off the snow for our camp.

Amanda: I'll help set up the tent.

Narrator: By morning the wagon was not yet finished. That afternoon, lacking adequate tools and lumber, the men announced they had done all they could.

Phineas: We think this wagon will make it the last half of the trip. We need good lumber to make it a permanent fix.

Ann Eliza: We'll break camp and get things loaded while you get the first wagons across that dugway. From the looks of it, our five wagons could take the rest of the day to navigate that narrow path.

Phineas: We'll get started. It's so cold, I'll be glad to get our family to a permanent camp. I can see it's hard to keep the baby warm, Amanda.

Amanda: Somehow she has been all right. I'll help clean up, Ann Eliza.

Phineas leaves, and William Cook runs to the women.

William C: You won't believe what happened. That wagon they fixed for two days just tipped over and fell down the canyon. We'll never get the food and clothes in it because it's at the bottom of a 500 foot cliff.

Amanda: It had all my children's clothes in it. And my bedding and pans. What will I do?

Ann Eliza: We'll share everything we have, Amanda. You won't lack anything. But I'm so sorry it happened. In such a cold place, it seems we would need everything we brought.

Amanda: Somehow the Lord will provide because we're being obedient.

Narrator: After an arduous ten-day journey, the three Cook families and their remaining four wagons completed the 45 miles and arrived in Paris.

Harriet: Look, it's not much of a town after all. It's just a bunch of teepees with a few log houses.

Phineas: They must not have a mill to cut wood around here. That sounds like a job for me.

Ann Eliza: But for now, we have to find a place to spend the winter.

Settler: Welcome. We heard there were families coming from Franklin. I'm glad you made it.

David: We made it but one of our wagons didn't. And my new Sunday clothes are at the bottom of a cliff.

Settler: We'll all help each other, and maybe you can even get some more Sunday clothes. You can stay in some of these teepees which have been vacated, and we'll help you find firewood. Then we'll share some of our logs so you can build your own house.

Narrator: By Christmas Day Phineas had a fine log cabin built with two rooms for his two families. William and Harriet Teeples also built a cabin, and they all had Christmas Dinner in the large cabin, inviting settlers who had recently arrived.

Phineas: This Christmas, we're thankful for our blessings. We all arrived safely in spite of a host of troubles.

David: And my clothes are at the bottom of the cliff.

Amanda: But you're safe, David. That's what really matters.

Phineas: That's why we must give thanks on this day for God's blessings.

Ann Eliza: I think we have to go back a few years to see those blessings.

Amanda: Yes, like the Christmas of 1860 when our whole place burned to the ground.

Ann Eliza: We thought it was a fine reward for what had just happened in California.

Phineas: Some of the family won't even remember what happened.

Ann Eliza: My parents live in Stockton, California and invited us to stay with them that summer.

Phineas: Then they tried to get us to stay there permanently.

Ann Eliza: My Pa showed us the beautiful green pasture land all around him. He owned so much of it he wanted to share it with us. He promised our lives would be much easier, and I think he was right. But we had made a commitment to help build Zion in Utah.

Phineas: We quoted Mosiah 2:21: "… therefore, if ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you." We were so sure God would make things easy for us in Utah after we had resisted that temptation to leave.

Ann Eliza: Then that winter everything burned. We were left with no house, no clothes, no food.

William: We didn't even have hay to feed our animals.

Phineas: We had nothing, and we were out on the Lone Tree Ranch on the west side of Utah Lake. If Brigham Young hadn't called us to go up to Cedar Fort we would have starved and frozen that winter.

Amanda: Isn't it interesting that after all His promises, the Lord often blesses us with trials instead of prosperity. Maybe if we had done well on the Lone Tree Ranch, we would <u>not</u> have wanted to heed this call to build the Bear Lake region.

Ann Eliza: Yes, I think it humbled us enough that we were able to listen to the prophet's voice--instead of being too comfortable to want to disrupt our lives.

Harriet: It's true. When we keep the commandments and do what the prophet asks, God really does bless and prosper us.

William T. But sometimes we have to wait a while to see those blessings.

Phineas: We have much to be thankful for. There is much work ahead for us, but we'll remember this day that God has remembered Phineas W. Cook and his family,

and has brought us safely to this warm house with two fine big rooms. We have food, we have four wagons with goods for our family, and we have the gospel of Jesus Christ. There's not much more we could hope for.

David: Well, I could hope for what's at the bottom of that cliff.

Amanda: David, hush. Concentrate of being thankful for what you have—not what you don't have.