

The MPNHA Story



A group of current-day residents reenact the quilt walk, the incident in 1863 where seven men, laying quilts end to end to keep from sinking into the snow, walked 40 miles over a mountain to the nearest town. By doing so, they were able to get provisions and save the settlement of Panguitch from starvation. The Quilt Walk Monument in Panguitch, a project supported by MPNHA, memorializes the story.

The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area wants to tell a story.

It is the story of people who, led by faith and driven by determination, braved a frontier and carved out a new home in the wilderness. It is the story of the cooperation, industry, ingenuity, sweat-of-brow and the occasional miracle that enabled them to do so.

It's the story of the hardships and privations they endured; how they persevered through them; how they managed to create lives of joy, goodness and hope; and how they ultimately saw the realization of those hopes.

Take the historical example of a band of men from the town of Panguitch, where a hard winter threatened starvation for settlers. Deep snow would have prevented a mission of men from crossing the mountain to another town for life-saving food and supplies. The

resourceful men placed quilts end-to-end, upon which they could walk without sinking into the snow.

Likewise, consider the 250 men, women and children (and more than 1,000 head of livestock) who had been snowed in near the town of Escalante. Their only option was to travel down a red-rock bluff at a 45-degree angle for 2,000 feet, passing through a "Hole in the Rock," in order to fulfill their faith-inspired calling to settle what is now San Juan County.

The Mormon pioneer story captures what is good about America. It's a story that the late Senator Robert Bennett of Utah described as "one of the most compelling and captivating in our nation's history."

The visitor to the corridor along U.S. Highway 89 in central and southern Utah learns how the pioneers interacted with each other; how they interacted with the land, which offered ineffable beauty and abundant