

Legacy

Written by: Steve Dunn Hanson

Music By: Jackie Frost Halversen

CAST:

Emigrant Husband – David Demars

Emigrant Wife – Natalie Smith

Father – Myron Thurber

Daughter – Renee Porter

Son-in-Law – Steve Porter

Grandmother - Stacy Julian

Narrator – Paul Halversen

Father, daughter and son-in-law are in a modern day setting on the platform, stage right. Props include a journal and others to be determined.

Emigrant husband and emigrant wife are in period clothing and have singing parts only. They will be on the platform, stage left. Props to be determined.

Grandmother is in period clothing in back of the sacrament table, stage left. Props include a journal and pen and others to be determined.

The piano, synthesizer, flutist, and celloist are stage right with synthesizer, flutist, and celloist either on a platform by the exit door below the piano or next to the piano.

The choir sits on the back two rows of the choir seats.

The projector will be at the first row in front of the podium. The narrator will be running the slides

The stage is dark and initial slide(s) show during the narration.

Narrator

Every member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints living today has been given a priceless gift: The legacy of a pioneer heritage. Regardless of our individual lineage, we are either the physical progeny or the spiritual siblings of those who have gone before. And their sacrifices, their testimonies forged in affliction's fire, and their struggles to find joy through Christ in the midst of intense sorrow, are their gifts to us.

The question: What are *we* doing with that legacy? “For what doth it profit a man (or a woman) if a gift is bestowed upon (them), and (they) receive not the gift? Behold, (they) rejoice not in that which is given unto (them), neither rejoice in him (or her) who is the giver of the gift.” (See D&C 88:33)

And their legacy?

The true experience of Hakan and Karna, early Swedish pioneers, is a type of our own lives. An allegory of *our* journey from the presence of our Heavenly Father to follow Jesus Christ to this earth to know and become like Him. As we learn *about* the experiences of those who have gone before us...and learn *from* them, the way we live our lives begins to reflect this remarkable gift we’ve been given. And this extraordinary legacy is then passed on through us to our own children...and grandchildren...and all who we seek to serve and bless.

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law. NOTE: Dialogue may be slightly modified by the actors if necessary for them to feel more comfortable and/or sound more “natural.” Please check any suggested changes with Steve Hanson

Father: How you feeling, sweetheart?

Daughter: (*Emotional*) I don’t know, Dad. It’s... It’s too hard.

Father: Yeah. (*He takes her hand*)

Daughter: Our first baby and... We waited so long. God had to know how much we wanted her. We’d have been good parents. He knew that! Why? Why did

he...(Crying)

Father: "Why?" Yeah. I'm not very good at answering "why" questions.

Son-in-Law: (*Somewhat belligerent*) Not fair! All these other people not wanting kids. Doing everything they can to not have them. We want them so bad and then... It's not fair!

Daughter: I don't know if I can do this, Dad. If it weren't for the gospel...

Son-in-Law: The gospel! We try to live the gospel. Do everything we can. Yeah, we're not perfect, but we're trying and we... And we tried so hard to have a baby and finally we have a baby and then... (*He stops to compose himself*) We have a baby, then she's... Then she's gone. Why... (*Stops again*) I don't understand!

Father: (*Begin music: "My Legacy"*) I wish there was a magic wand I could... I could wave to help you see this life in context. It's *real* context. And maybe you could see some purpose in all this. There's no wand, but maybe... Maybe the lives of our grandparents can help you see. Their experiences have sure helped me. (*Pauses*) I think that's their legacy. Their legacy to me. (*Smiles a tight smile*) Their legacy to you.

Spotlight on Father, Images show on screen

[1- Song: My Legacy (Father & Choir)]

Spotlight on Father, daughter, son-in-law

Father: (*Picks up journal.*) My great, great grandfather and grandmother joined the Church in Sweden back in 1862. Grandma kept a journal. She gave it to her son, my great grandfather, just before she died, and it was ultimately passed on to my father. (*He smiles and lifts up the book*) Now I have it. What she had to say about their experiences has affected me deeply, and I think it might help both of you. (*Looks down as if he were reading from the journal.*)

Spotlight on Grandmother as she writes in her journal - Images show on screen

Grandmother (*voice with a little accent*): In the old country things were pretty good for us. Most people had to rent their farms from wealthy landowners, but we

had our own little place. Small, but good farm land. We raised some potatoes and wheat and rye. We had some chickens and a cow. When we joined the Church, Dad and I began to save up so we could go with the Saints to Zion. It wasn't easy. It took us nearly three years. But finally we got on the ship with our only son, Lars. He was two years old. I was expecting another baby and was pretty miserable, but Dad and I thought I would be okay. It took us six weeks on the ship. I don't want to do that again! I was sick the whole time. Miserable. I thought I was going to die. Dad was really worried about me and kept saying we shouldn't have left home. Sweet little Lars. He would hardly ever leave my side. He was worried too. But I was happy we were doing what we were supposed to be doing, because... I knew the gospel was true.

Spotlight on Father, Daughter and Son-in-Law.

Daughter: I don't know how she did that! I was so sick when I was pregnant I could hardly get out of bed! Wow. What a testimony she had!

Son-in-Law: (*Shaking his head*) I don't think I'd have done that! I wouldn't risk my wife's life!

Father: That's how Grandpa felt. That's when he started having struggles with things. He started to question his own inspiration about leaving home. That led him to question his feelings about the Church. What happened next after they arrived in New York didn't help any. (*Looks down at journal as if to read.*)

Spotlight on Grandmother as she writes in her journal - Images show on screen

Grandmother: We landed at Castle Garden, New York and stayed there until we could leave on the train to Omaha, Nebraska. That's as far as the train went. We'd go by wagons from there to Salt Lake. When we got to where the trains were, Brother Anderson, who was the captain of our group, said that the train accommodations weren't very good. (*A sour laugh*) That was an understatement!

We come to find our transportation to Omaha was stock cars that hogs had been hauled in. They were filled with hog lice! We had no other choice but to ride in them. We cleaned them out the best we could. There weren't any seats or beds. We

just rode sitting on the floor of the stock car and laying on some straw that the men threw in. And I thought being on that ship was miserable!

Dad really got angry. He kept saying, "We're no better than hogs!" He blamed the Church leaders and started to question his testimony. Of course, it was hard, but I think our leaders were doing the best they could. We were in hog cars because that's all that was available to get us to Omaha. I can put up with some misery...because the gospel's true! I know it!

Spotlight on emigrant wife. Images show on screen

[2-Song: *I Know That the Gospel Is True* (Emigrant Wife, Choir)]

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law. Music continues in background.

Father: Grandma's taught me to try to remember my testimony when things aren't going so well. Somehow just thinking about the gospel helps put things in perspective. Increases my hope. Helps me get through.

Daughter: (*wipes her eyes*) I know it's true, Father. I know the gospel's true.

Spotlight on Daughter. Spotlight on both Daughter and Emigrant Wife during duet. Images show on screen

[2-Song: *I Know That the Gospel Is True* (Daughter, Daughter and Emigrant Wife duet, Choir)]

Music continues in the background.

Father: You're like your grandmother, Sweetheart. But Grandpa's faith was not as strong as grandmother's. For a while he seemed to try, and I think he wanted to believe. But...

Spotlight on Emigrant Husband. Images show on screen

[3-Song: *Don't Know If the Gospel's True* (Emigrant Husband)]

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law. Music continues in background.

Son-in-Law: I think I know how he felt. Sometimes...that's how I feel

*Spotlight on Son-in-Law and on Son-in-Law and Emigrant Husband during duet.
Images show on screen*

[3-Song: *Don't Know If the Gospel's True* (Son-in-Law, Son-in-Law and Emigrant Husband duet, Choir.)]

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law.

Father: (*Kind smile at Son-in-Law*) When we suffer real pain, it's only natural that we not only question our ability to bear it... but why do we even have the pain in the first place?

Son-in-Law: (*Shakes his head and holds his wife's hand*) When I was growing up I was told to keep the commandments. Go on a mission. Marry in the temple. (*laughs sarcastically*) That'd make everything in my life work out. Yeah, right. Like I'd *always* be happy. Well, I've done those things and now... (*He swallows and blinks back tears*) Now... Now we lose our baby. So... So, what about all the promises that everything works out!

Father: (*Reflective*) Yeah. Promises. (*Pause*) Maybe.. Maybe, it just takes some time...some experience...to understand what the promises are. Joy, for example. Over the years, I've thought a lot about this joy and sorrow thing. (*Looks intensely at son-in-Law*). I can't have one without the other! I *have* to have experience with sorrow to even understand or *feel* joy. Yeah, they're opposite ends of the stick, but they *define* the stick. They define *reality*. You take away one of those ends, and you take away the other one because then there's no stick. There simply could not be joy without their being...

Daughter: (*Interrupts*) But do we have to experience everything? Can't we just learn these things by reading about what other people have gone through? Like Grandma and Grandpa?

Father: (*Shakes his head*) We can't know joy *or* sorrow by simply reading about them. If we haven't deeply experienced them for ourselves, then they would only be words to us. Words with shallow meanings. Words that had nothing to do with our *own* reality. I think what we learn from Grandma's and Grandpa's experience is

that we find *our* promised land, *our* joy, by trekking through *our* own wilderness. *Our* own sorrow.

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, Son-in-law. Images show on screen

[4-Song: *There Has to Be a Wilderness (Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law, Choir)*]

Daughter: Did Grandma and Grandpa get to Omaha okay?

Father: I'll let Grandma answer that. (*Looks into journal as if to read.*)

Spotlight on Grandmother as she reads her journal. Maybe spotlight on Emigrant Wife & Emigrant Husband as they pantomime what Grandmother is saying. Images show on screen.

Grandmother: Thank goodness we arrived at Omaha without any further troubles. At least worth mentioning. Dad was still angry about the hog cars though. When we met the captain who was going to lead our wagon train across the plains, Dad talked pretty rough to him. I felt bad about that, but I didn't say anything. This was June, and our baby was due within the month. We were both worried about me having the baby out in the middle of nowhere. The captain said there were midwives in every division of the company, and all the wagons would stop when anything like a birth occurred. They wouldn't start up until all was well with the mother and baby. That sounded alright to us, so we left with the rest of the company.

I couldn't walk very much, given my state, so Dad fixed a place for me to rest on the back end of the wagon. Little Lars would walk alongside the wagon as long as he could, then Dad would ride him on his shoulders for a while, and then he would come and sit with me. He was such a loving little boy.

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law.

Daughter: (Anxious, concerned) Uh, what about the baby? Was the baby... Was the baby born okay?

Father: Yes. That was my great grandfather. I even lived with him for a few months when I was a little boy. Here's how Grandma described it. (*Looks into*

journal as if to read.)

Spotlight on Grandmother as she reads her journal. Maybe spotlight on Emigrant Wife & Emigrant Husband as they pantomime what Grandmother is saying. Images show on screen.

Grandmother: Everything went just like the captain said, and about two weeks into our trip, our little Alfred was born. It was midday, and the captain was true to his word. The whole wagon train stopped for an hour and a half to make sure everything was okay with me. I was embarrassed that I held the whole train up! But I was grateful that everything was alright. Dad and I had been so worried about this baby, but he was healthy and just fine.

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law.

Daughter: *(Sighs)* What a relief that must have been for them!

Father: Yes, but... Here's what Grandma said happened shortly after. *(Looks into journal as if to read.)*

Spotlight on Grandmother as she reads her journal. Maybe spotlight on Emigrant Wife & Emigrant Husband as they pantomime what Grandmother is saying. Images show on screen.

Grandmother: It wasn't three days later, though, that our little Lars took sick. There was cholera in the camp, and he got it. I couldn't even hold him! With me nursing Alfred, if I got too close to Lars, the baby could get the cholera too. My little son just lay there limp and red with fever. He kept calling out, "Mama. Mama." And I couldn't do a thing about it. I tried to sing to him and talk to him, but he needed me to hold him. To let him feel... to feel his Mama was there for him.

Night came and he got weaker and weaker. We didn't have any candles. Dad went to the neighboring wagon to borrow one. They said they needed all theirs for themselves. He was fuming and just sat there holding Lars in the dark. He wouldn't talk. Not to me. Not to anybody.

Spotlight on Emigrant Husband and wife. Images show on screen.

[5-Song: *Why Did I Leave Home* (Emigrant Husband, Emigrant Wife, Choir)]

Spotlight on Father, Daughter and Son-in-Law. Music continues in background.

Father: *(Takes a deep breath)* There have been times in my life when my sorrow has been... *(Emotional)* Been so overwhelming. My pain so intense. I've wondered why... Why I would ever agree to leave my *heavenly* home and come to this world.

Spotlight on Father. Images show on screen

[5-Song: *Why Did I leave Home* (Father, Choir)]

Father: It's that joy/sorrow thing again. We walked into the wilderness of this world, just like Grandma and Grandpa walked into their wilderness, because there was no other way for us to know joy. There was no other way for us to be...like Jesus Christ.

Daughter: What happened...to little Lars?

Son-in-Law: Uh... did he die?

Father: Yes. He died. *(Looks at journal like he's going to read)*

Spotlight on Grandmother as she reads her journal. Maybe spotlight on Emigrant Wife & Emigrant Husband as they pantomime what Grandmother is saying. Images show on screen.

Grandmother: Dad sat there until daybreak. Lars passed away sometime during the night. I don't think even Dad knew when he died. As soon as it was light, Dad wrapped Lars in a blanket and laid him by me and hurried off to tell the captain what had happened. They both came back just a few minutes later. The captain was really nice. He said he would get some men over to dig a grave and then have a service for Lars before the wagon train pulled out.

Dad took some boards off of the wagon box and made a small casket. There wasn't enough wood to make a lid so we just kept him wrapped in the blanket. The ground

was hard and after about a half hour of digging, the captain said that they didn't have time to dig any deeper. The hole was only about two feet deep. I could tell the captain felt bad, but he said we were stopped in a dangerous place. The Indians were aggressive here, and we couldn't risk staying any longer.

So we had a short funeral service. The captain spoke for a few minutes, and then we sang *Come, Come Ye Saints* and one of the brethren said a prayer, and it was time to go.

Spotlight on Father, Daughter and Son-in-Law.

Daughter: (*Crying*) She had to leave her son? His body just out there where she could never...

Son-in-Law: (*Shaking his head*) What did her husband think of that?

Father: I'll let Grandma tell you. (*He looks at journal*)

Spotlight on Grandmother as she reads her journal. Maybe spotlight on Emigrant Wife & Emigrant Husband as they pantomime what Grandmother is saying.

Images show on screen.

Grandmother: Dad wasn't satisfied. He told the captain the grave was too shallow. Animals would dig up the body. The captain said he was sorry, but they couldn't do any more. Dad was angry again. He told the captain to go on, but he was going to stay behind and dig a proper grave.

I sat in the back of the wagon with baby Alfred and watched Dad. He was crying. He picked up the shovel and began to dig a deeper grave. He kept digging as the wagon train moved out with Alfred and me. I watched him until he was too far away to see. And I wondered. I wondered if I was going to lose my husband too.

Spotlight on Emigrant Husband. Images show on screen.

[6-Song: *Left Behind* (Emigrant Husband, Choir)]

Spotlight on Father, Daughter and Son-in-Law.

Daughter: (*Crying*) What happened to him, Dad? Did Grandma ever see him

again?

Father: Yes. It took him all day to dig a grave that was deep enough to keep the animals out. When he was through, it was nearly dark, and he walked all night to catch up with the wagon train.

Son-in-Law: Was he still mad?

Father: Yeah. He was still mad. Mad at God for letting his son die. Mad at the captain for not waiting for a proper grave to be dug. Mad at the people who wouldn't lend him a candle. Mad at the Church because... Because in his mind none of this would have happened if it weren't for the missionaries and for the Church.

Daughter: (*Hesitant*) Uh, what about Grandma? How did she feel?

Father: Yeah. Grandma. The very things that made Grandpa mad seemed to make her stronger. More faithful. She saw that many others were having at least as rough a time as she was. She wanted to help them.

Spotlight on Emigrant Wife. Images show on screen.

[7-Song: *I Am Finding Joy in My Journey* (Emigrant Wife, Choir)]

Spotlight on Father, Daughter and Son-in-Law.

Father: Grandma's and Grandpa's experience on their trip to Zion seemed to point them in opposite directions. They arrived in Utah and continued to have struggles. Their hardships brought Grandpa a great deal of bitterness. I'm told that eventually he stopped going to church. He'd find fault with the leaders and was always complaining and cranky with everybody.

But Grandma... She became more like the Savior. That was *her* choice. Each trial seemed to bring her extra strength. She was compassionate. Kind. Loving. I mean, I'm sure she had to wrestle with herself, but she *became* who she *chose* to be. (Pause) So... So, maybe in a way our experiences by themselves are kinda neutral. I mean they're *temporary*. It's *our* choice, and nobody else's, whether we become a better person or a worse person because of them. Our experiences are temporary, but we are *not!* We are eternal! And just maybe our stay on this earth is all about who we choose to become as a result of the experiences we have.

Son-in-Law: (*Shakes his head*) I don't know. (*He gives his wife a pleading look*) I just don't... I mean, what we're going through is so hard. Impossible, but... But what if we lived back then. What if we had to go through what your grandparents went through? I don't know if I could've...

Daughter takes his hand.

Spotlight on Daughter and Son-in-law. Images show on screen.

[8-Song: *I Wonder what I Would Have Done Back Then* (Daughter, Son-in-Law, Choir)]

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law. Music continues in background.

Father: (*Smiles at the children and takes their hands*) I believe I know who you are. Our grandmother is your mentor. My mentor. Her life is our legacy. It's not *when* we come to this earth, and it's not the *circumstances* we find ourselves in that determines who we are... Who we are, who we are to be, that's *our* choice. And our choice alone. Whenever. However. Wherever. Doesn't matter. And if our choice is to follow Jesus Christ, we will *choose* to let our unique, even-one-of-a-kind, circumstances and experiences, lead us to Him. And following that path will help us become as He is. And that path will give to our posterity the legacy, the gift, our grandmother gave to us.

Spotlight on Father, Daughter, and Son-in-Law. Images show on screen.

[9-Song: *Honoring His Name* (Father, Daughter, Son-in-Law, Choir)]

Spotlight on Emigrant Wife. Images show on screen.

[9a-Song: *I'd Do It All Again* (Emigrant Wife)]

Spotlight on Grandmother. She will speak as directed at the end of the song.

Grandmother: I'd do it all again.

Spotlights on everyone. Images show on screen

[10-Song: *Reprise*: (All sing)]