

# A thousand miles to benefit orphans

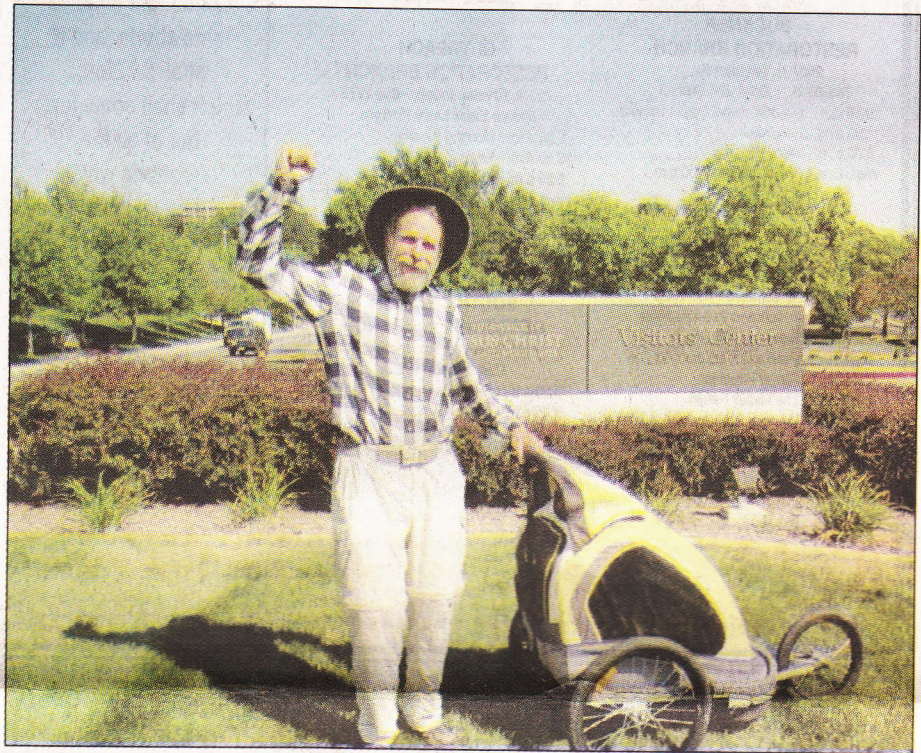
**Submitted by Shirley Murdock**

Claron Twitchell, 62, of Salt Lake City, walked a 1,000 miles to honor ancestors and benefit Sudanese orphans.

Twitchell, a former software engineer, had time on his hands so he began to look for an adventure. Being an avid back-packer and hiker, he decided upon an extended walk, a very extended walk. Having LDS ancestors who walked from Missouri to Salt Lake City, gave impetus to the decision to walk from Salt Lake City to Jackson County.

Being on the board of directors of the non-profit Southern Sudan Humanitarian, an organization which helps with orphan care and elementary education in the villages of South Sudan, Africa, provided Twitchell with a second impetus for the unique walk that could give visibility to the organization and provide opportunities for interested people to donate to the cause. Most Sudanese orphans arrive at South Sudan Humanitarian with nothing but the clothes they are wearing. They are given a place to live, love and acceptance, and schooling.

After weeks of preparations, body conditioning, and laying out the route, he began his walk on June 17 at "This Is The Place Monument" in Salt Lake City, which commemorates where the



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LDS Saints first entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1847.

Twitchell camped out along the way in parks, campgrounds, and, one night, in a Wal-Mart parking lot outside Fort Collins, Colo. His grandson, Trey, joined him for several miles as he walked into Vernal, Utah. When he arrived at Denver, his wife flew in and spent three days with him. Other unique travelers were encountered along the way. He used a jogging stroller to house his belongings.

There were mountains to climb, the highest being Cameron Pass,

rising 14,276 feet in elevation. Things leveled out in eastern Colorado and shouts of joy rang across the prairie land when he reached the half-way mark of 500 miles, which occurred eight miles east of Brush, Colo.

Twitchell declared "it became a profoundly spiritual experience through the days of solitude giving me time to ponder the things of God. Prayers in many forms and for many reasons were uttered many times daily. I know Guardian Angels traveled with me."

It was about noon on Sept. 6 that he walked across the Chouteau

Trafficway Bridge over the Missouri River and into Independence and beheld the road sign that declared, "Entering Jackson County." He proceeded on to the LDS Visitors Center on Walnut in Independence, where he received a rousing welcome by the missionaries serving there. They took him to dinner to celebrate the triumph of completing a magnificent undertaking. The first step of the first mile had been taken, the last step of the thousandth mile finished. His ancestors would be pleased, the Sudanese orphans grateful.

For more information, visit Twitchell's Blog: follow.claront.com.