

They had no idea that our colonies could make such an excellent showing, and when President Diaz, minister of Fomento Leal and other government officials saw the photographs of our principal residences, schoolhouses and views of the colony, together with the products of cheese, canned fruits, jellies, candy, molasses, roller mill flour and potatoes all put up in the American style, they were delighted. President Diaz said it appeared to him to be the thrift and energy of fifty years rather than the few years the colonies had been established. Many friendly expressions were made toward the colonies and much good was accomplished, in awarding the prizes at the close of the exposition. Out of the three grand prizes awarded, the Mormon colonies received one also ten first prizes. President Diaz instructed the Minister of Fomento to address a note to our agent requesting him to take back to the colonists his personal thanks for the excellent manner in which they had colonized into Mexico, and for the industry and good example exhibited since coming.

At the afternoon meeting the general authorities of the Church, as sustained at the last general conference of the Church, and the local authorities of the Stake were presented and unanimously sustained.

On Sunday at the direction of Elder Teasdale, the address on Church discipline was read and unanimously sustained. The remainder of the time was occupied by Elder Maeser, Patriarchs Lunt, Stowell and Little, Elder Teasdale and Counselor Helaman Pratt giving many valuable instructions.

Monday morning at 10 o'clock the Young Ladies' conference was held with a large attendance, the speakers dwelling principally upon the strong influence upon society that might be exercised by the young ladies and the high standard of morality that should exist among the youth of the colonies.

At 2 p. m. the quarterly conference of the Relief Societies of the Stake convened and in the evening a farewell sociable party with a programme of songs, recitations, addresses and dancing was given by the Sunday schools of the Stake in honor of Elder George Teasdale.

An excellent spirit prevailed throughout the entire six days of conference.

Conference adjourned until August to be held in Colonia, Juarez.

JOSEPH C. BENTLEY,
Stake Clerk.

REMINISCENCES.

BLACKFOOT, Idaho, June 6th, 1896.

I realize to some extent that the DESERET NEWS, as all other newspapers, is a medium of communication of incidents and facts of interest to the general public and thus gives an opportunity to man, with his endowment of intelligence and his glorious organization to communicate with his fellow men. I can always rely upon the DESERET NEWS as a communicator to be trusted. It records among other things the rise and progress of a growing community, which since 1847 has spread out from Salt Lake valley to Canada on the north and Old Mexico to the south. It is plainly manifest that from 1847 to 1896, only one short year less than fifty years, or one half of a century, has

elapsed since the feet of your correspondent were planted on Mexican soil, in the sage brush desert of the Digger Indians, whose apparel was rabbit skins, twisted on sticks into rolls, and fastened together into rude garments, to shield their nakedness. But these luxuries were more for the tender sex. The huck Indians sometimes as a luxury used the skins of the deer, elk, antelope or buffalo, which they in their rude ingenuity tanned and dressed, and shaped into mockisins or shoes, and other apparel. Many of them only used a britch-clout, and sometimes in cold weather a dressed buffalo robe, for at that early date millions of wild buffaloes covered the wild plains, and herds of elk, deer and antelope roamed through the valleys and mountains. Shall I ever forget those wild and savage like scenes of 1847, forty-nine years ago? I can still gaze, as it were, upon the parched ground full of cracks and seams, so numerous that in many places it was deemed dangerous to ride a horse on the gallop, because of the dry openings. I still recall those dry, dreary, sage brush plains, surrounded by snow capped mountains on every side, and in the evening the howl of the coyotes, and yell of Indians, so deeply and indelibly impressed on my mind. I was then with my wife and one child 1,000 miles away from civilization in this wild, apparently forsaken salt land, uninhabited, except by wild Indians, wolves and jack rabbits. Can I forget the mother who bore me, and nursed me? Shall I forget the silent prayers and tears offered up in those lonely hours for our safety in this lonely place? Never, never can I forget the wrongs of Missouri, the murders of Illinois, the scenes at Carthage jail.

I remember the words of the Prophet just previous to his martyrdom—for to my knowledge he said to a small company of his near friends: "You will go into the Rocky mountains where beautiful valleys exist. But before that time, the blood of some will be shed; others will lay their bodies down by the way side, as martyrs, worn out for the Gospel's sake. But some of you, my brethren, will yet go beyond the Rocky mountains and see this people become a great nation and people."

In the spring of 1847, shortly after the one forty-three pioneers, I wended my way westward leaving behind me my aged mother, a widow, and others who had been driven away from their homes by Christians, to find a home among heathens or wild Indians. On our arrival here the stars and stripes were raised by our little band, while this now beautiful and desirable valley (then a desert) was still under Mexican domination, and 500 of our exiled Mormon battalion was aiding our government in redeeming these valleys. It was done, and the country has now grown from a place of sage brush and Indians, to the wonderful State of Utah. But it cost untold sufferings and privations, difficulties, tears, exposures, sickness and death, to make Utah what it is.

On Utah's pioneers rested the burden to clear away the sage brush of Salt Lake City, dig the ditches, water the parched and cracked ground and make fruit and roses to grow where sage brush was. I am still among the living witnesses to these facts and cannot but notice with amazement, statements of some who are expected to tell the truth. A certain Methodist preacher left the following on

record just before leaving for the east on a lecturing tour:

"The pioneers in 1847 found these beautiful valleys of fertile soil all ready to stir up the alluvial soil, cast in a few seeds and reap."

A greater falsehood was never uttered by any preacher of his kind, and I pity those who part with their money to civilize our Mormon children, who have proved themselves able to go to the World's Fair and compete with the sweetest singers of the world.

There are a few stubborn facts regarding pioneer life of 1847. Mrs. Harriet Young expressed herself thus: "Weak and weary as I am, I would rather go 1,000 miles further on than to remain in such a forsaken place as this is." James Bridger, a noted mountaineer, has often been quoted, and truly too. He said he would be willing to pay \$1,000 for the first ear of corn that could be raised in Utah deserts, for, said he, there is frost every month in the year in these valleys of Utah. Truly to me it looked serious for a few years, and but for the interposition of God's aid, all efforts would have proven a failure. What with Indians, frosts and crickets which swarmed down upon our growing crops and left us with hunger, flour could scarcely be had at one dollar per pound. Thirty minutes after the arrival of the pioneers, Willard Woodruff lead off in preparation for putting seeds into the ground, but water had to be turned out of city creek first to soak the dry, parched ground, before a plow could move the soil—the first irrigation of the West.

Two weeks after our arrival a girl baby was born on what is now the Temple block. Elizabeth Steel is the honored one. Soon after a school was started by Mary Dilworth in the Old Fort. Split logs were made into seats and a pine table for a desk. The first Sabbath school was started by Richard Ballintyne. In 1848 over 900 acres of wheat were put in and 5,000 acres of land brought into cultivation. The first type set was by Brigham Young. On the 15th of June, 1850, was the first issue of a weekly newspaper, the DESERET NEWS, Willard Richards Editor—only a hand press was then used. A Spanish wall was built in 1853, nine miles long, six feet at base and two feet six inches at top. This was a protection from Indian raids.

After reviewing some of the past scenes which brought us to these mountains, and the many changes which have taken place in the climate from what it was and the fruitful fields and homes on every hand, I can but exclaim: God has been merciful and kind unto the exiles and caused the wilderness to bloom as the rose.

I have just passed through Cache valley as far north as Preston, where I met in the Stake Academy 180 Sunday school pupils and teachers and addressed them. I having seen fields and flocks everywhere on the way to Blackfoot, Idaho, and Riverside and Mureland, where four meetings have been held. I traveled thirty five miles and saw four canals bringing out the water of Snake river above Blackfoot. The largest of these is the People's canal, forty miles in length and a Mormon enterprise. This enterprise will make many new homes. Market lake and Rexburg are the next points for Sunday and Monday, 7th and 8th of June.

EDWARD STEVENSON.