

tracts of high lands which were originally covered with timber but were cleared for farming purposes, have of late years been so badly cut up by washouts that it is almost unfit for cultivation; and the great complaint among the farmers is that it don't pay to till the soil like it did in early Mormon days. Consequently land is coming down in price every year, and at the present time is scarcely worth more than \$20 or \$25 per acre, except in close proximity to the market towns, when it of course commands a higher price. There are, however, some very fine country places around Independence, prominent among which is the fine residence of H. M. Vail, built in 1880-81; it is one of the most beautiful and costly residences in Jackson county, and is situated on the west side of North Liberty street, one mile north of the public square of Independence. The length of the mansion is 109 by 48 feet with a tower 80 feet high. The view from this tower is magnificent.

It has been supposed that the Temple lot is the highest point in Jackson county, but this appears to be a mistake, as there is a point near the Missouri river—a bluff overlooking that stream and the surrounding country—which is 1024 feet above the level of the Gulf of Mexico, while the level of Independence is only 972 feet, or 52 feet lower. The height of the bluff mentioned is 321 feet above low water mark in the Missouri river.

On my journey from Independence to the Missouri river today, I lingered on this high bluff overlooking the river, in order to enjoy the scenery. There, surrounded by extensive orchards of the finest fruit trees the country can afford, the grandest panorama of natural and artificial scenery meets the eye on every hand, the great Missouri meandering at your feet, beneath the bluff can be seen stretching through the green hills for twenty miles away, its banks fringed with a beautiful growth of walnut, oak, elm and hickory. Passenger steamers and freight boats are occasionally passing up and down the river, while the rush and rumble of the passing train on seven different railroads reverberate through the valley, and the white wreaths of smoke show the course of the iron horse. The spires and houses of half a dozen cities and towns on both sides of the river greet the eye of the beholder, among which are Independence, Kansas City, Wyandotte and Liberty, while near at hand the precipitous and rocky bluffs, the macadam road to Independence landing, the highly cultivated farms and gardens, the shrubbery, the clumps of timber and the thousands of fruit trees, make this one of the most attractive spots in the state of Missouri. Apples, peaches, pears, cherries, plums, quinces, grapes and a great variety of small fruit are grown in great profusion on this bluff.

Descending the bluff we (my companion was my friend C. A. Hall, of Independence, who took me to the railway station with his team) soon reached the point on the Missouri river known as old Wayne City, 4 miles from Independence, or 12 miles from Kansas City. This is where the old Ducker Ferry used to be on the main road of travel from Liberty to Independence. It was here that most of the Saints

who were driven out of Jackson county by a bloodthirsty mob in 1833 crossed the Missouri river into Clay county. It was also at this point that James Campbell and others lost their lives and where Samuel C. Owens and his companions had such a narrow escape from drowning while attempting to cross the river for the purpose of raising a mob with which to annihilate the members of Zion's Camp who under the leadership of the Prophet Joseph were nearing the borders of Clay county at the time. This circumstance happened on the 16th of June, 1834. When the mobbers had reached the middle of the river, the boat sank and seven out of about twelve or fifteen men were drowned; among them the notorious James Campbell, who had declared with a terrible oath that eagles and turkey buzzards should eat the flesh from his bones if he did not fix Joe Smith and his army in two days, so that their skins would not hold shucks! It seemed that Providence took him on his word; he did not kill Joe Smith and his army; but his dead body was eaten by the birds of prey which he himself had mentioned; and when a Mr. Purtle several days later found his remains on a little island a short distance below Blue Mills Ferry, only the bones were left.

At the point where Ducker's Ferry once was operated and where Wayne City once stood, only two houses remain; the ferry has long ago been discontinued, but one of the old ferry boats lies upon the bank of the stream, a wreck, nearly decayed. The Independence water-works is situated about half a mile below the ferry site. The Missouri at this point is confined to nearly half its ordinary width, and the channel is consequently deep. At present, however, the water in the river is very low, so much so that one of the Salt Lake excursionists, who had never seen the river before, but had heard of it since his childhood day, remarked: "Is it possible that this is the mighty Missouri of which I have heard so much? Why, it is not much bigger than our Jordan!"

Travelling by rail along the bank of the Missouri, I had a glimpse of the island on which the skeleton of Mr. Campbell, one of the mobbers referred to, was found. This island is near a farm owned by Geo. P. Hedrick, one of the Hedrick brethren from Independence, who pointed it out to me.

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway crosses the Missouri river on an elegant bridge near the town of Sibley. This town occupies the site of old Fort Osage, founded in 1808, and was the first settlement made by whites in Jackson county; it is 27 miles east of Kansas City.

ANDREW JENSON.

RICHMOND, Ray county, Mo., Sept. 5, 1893.—I arrived here from Kansas City this morning and have been busy most of the day reading and culling from old documents pertaining to the early history of the Church, in possession of David J. Whitmer; who, in connection with his nephew, Geo. C. L. Schweich, received me kindly and have rendered me efficient aid in my historical researches at this place.

Richmond has grown considerably

since I was here before, nearly five years ago, and many improvements are going on the present season, including the macadamizing of some of the principal streets, paving sidewalks, etc. Richmond is the county seat of Ray county and was named by the county court Monday, September 24, 1827. It is situated on two railroads, 44 miles northeast of Kansas City, 237 miles southwest of St. Louis and 67 miles southeast of St. Joseph. The main or central portion of Richmond stands on the crown of a graceful swell, and the suburban portions are located on the slopes of a succession of beautiful wooded hills that nearly surround the central town. The slopes abound in the most attractive building sites that command fine city and open valley views in almost every direction; it has scores of fine cottages, villas and dignified mansion homes. Many fine buildings have been erected of late years; a fine two-story brick building known as the Woodson institute, (a Methodist college,) has just been completed and was opened today for school purposes.

Accompanied by David J. Whitmer I have just visited the grave of his father David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He rests near the northwest corner of the new cemetery, and a plain, but nicely cut shaft of blue granite mounted upon a square base of close-grained sandstone, has been raised on his grave and on that of his wife who died soon after her husband. The whole monument does not exceed five feet in height, and the top has been chiseled out so as to represent two books—the Bible and the Book of Mormon—lying on top of one another. On the south side of the monument is the following inscription: "David Whitmer, died January 25, 1888, aged 53 years 20 days." On the west side in smaller letters: "The record of the Jews and the record of the Nephites are one. Truth is eternal." Beneath are the words, "Father and Mother," and still lower in large letters, "Whitmer." On the north side I read: "Julia A. Whitmer, died Feb. 25, 1889, aged 74 years, 18 days." In the old Richmond graveyard situated north of the town (the new one is west) rests the earthly remains of Peter Whitmer, senior, in whose house the Church was organized April 6, 1830, in Seneca Co., N. Y.; also his wife Mary, the only woman who was privileged to behold the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated; they were shown to her in her own dooryard in Fayette by a holy messenger. Also Jason Whitmer, one of the eight witnesses of the Book of Mormon, was buried in the old Richmond graveyard. By his side lies Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses; Martin Harris, the other one of the three witnesses, is buried in Clarkston, Utah. Hiram Page, another of the eight witnesses, is buried in the western part of Ray county. John Whitmer died in Far West, Caldwell county, Mo., but his remains were interred at Kingston, the present county seat of Caldwell. Peter Whitmer, Jr., and Christian Whitmer, were both buried in the western part of Clay county, Mo. Joseph Smith, Sr., and Hyrum Smith, the other two of the eight witnesses, were interred in Nau-