

# Before Nevada Was Carved From Utah's Western Border

THE relation of Nevada to Utah has always been an intimate one, and it is a question whether Utah's neighbor on the west is to be called most properly a sister or a daughter state. The fact that Utah once included not only Nevada, but Arizona, portions of Colorado, California, Wyoming and Oregon, entitles her to consideration as something of a mother of western states, and in this relationship Nevada was her most favorite child.

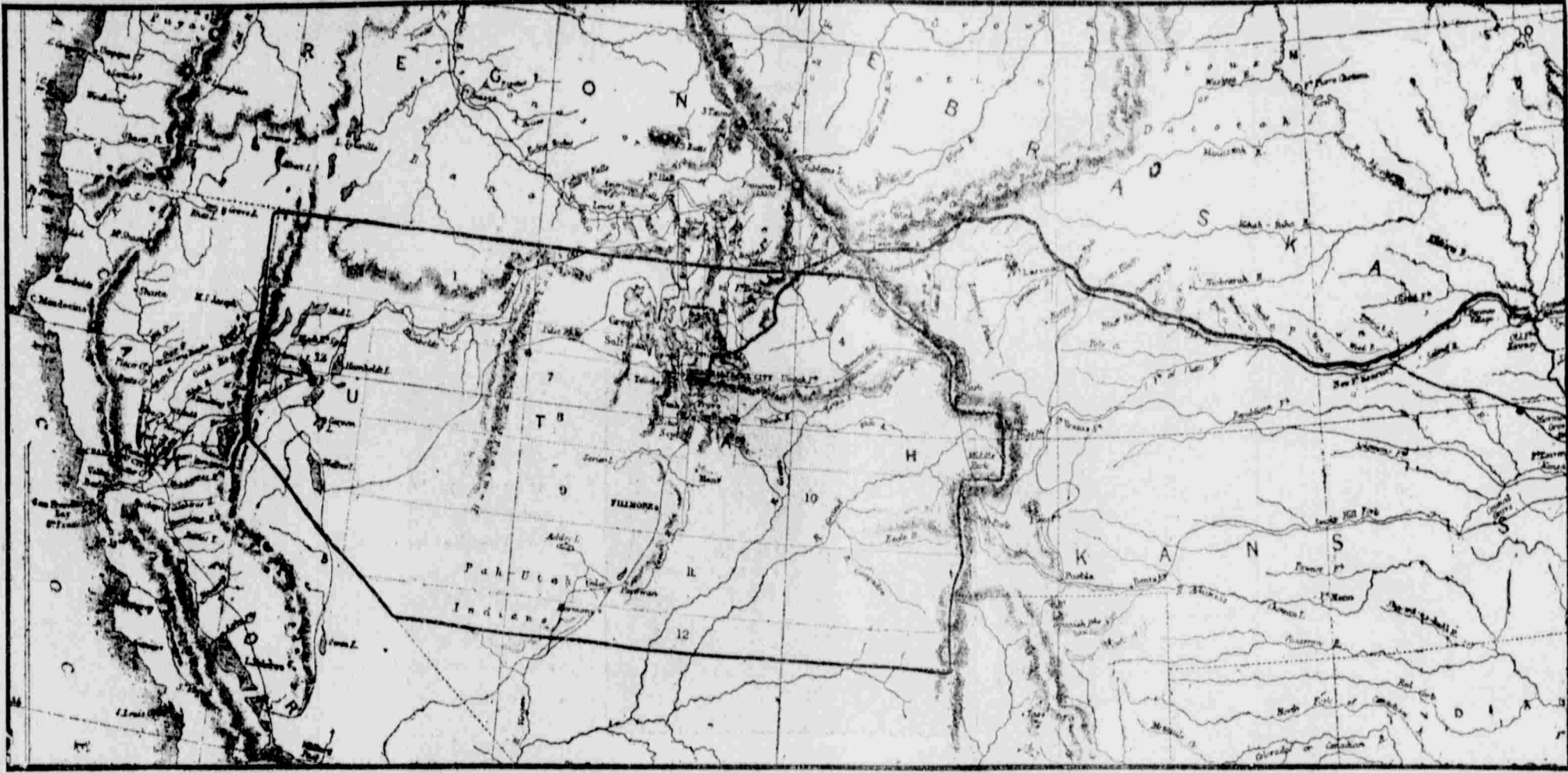
Time was when the member from Carson county sat in the Utah Legislature at Salt Lake, and justice was administered in Carson valley by the judge of the Third Judicial district of Utah. In pioneering Utah men did the first work, and descendants are living in Salt Lake today of the man who settled Carson county, of the man who built its first house, and the first house in Nevada, and of the first representative of Carson county in a territorial legislature.

The commencement of Nevada as an independent community came with the Johnson's army trouble, and the withdrawal of the first residents at the call of Brigham Young when there was need for all "Mormons" to stand together at Salt Lake.

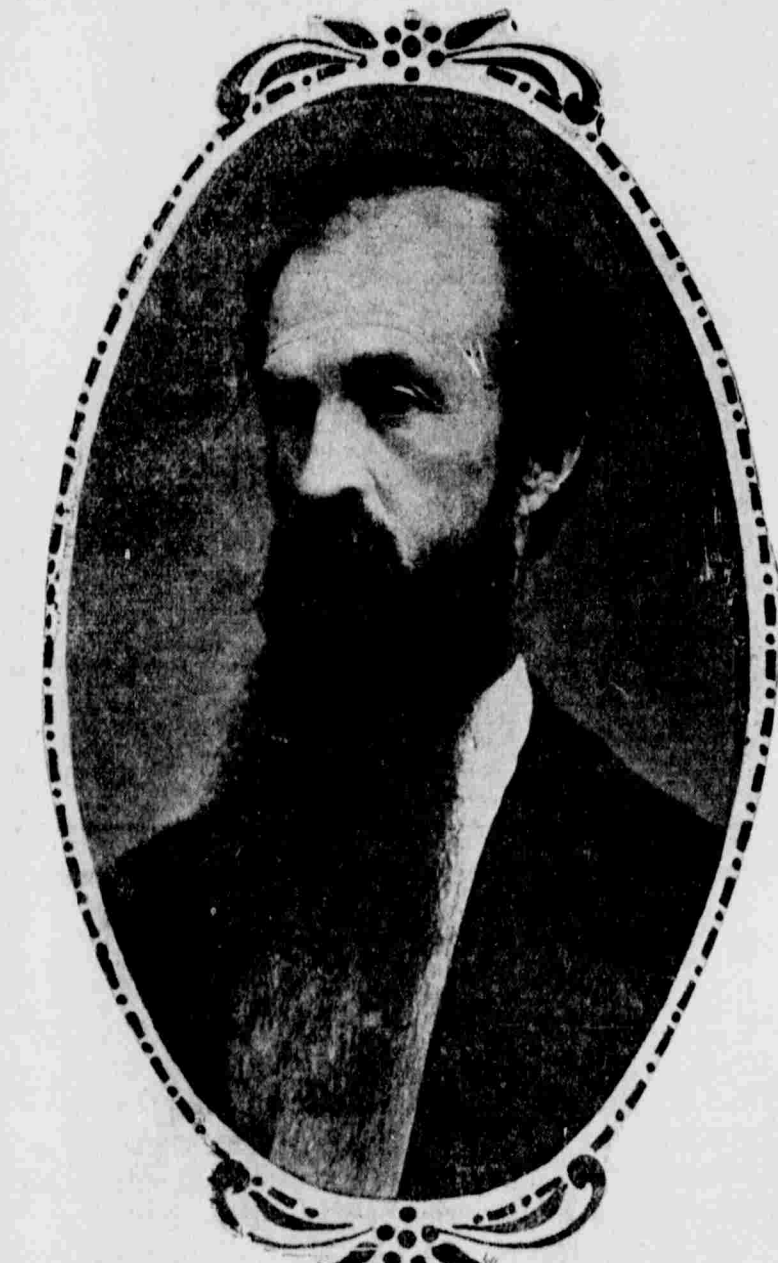
People who read the story of the rocks tell of a day when the tops of the Wasatch and the tops of the Sierra Nevada were the pinnaled walls of a great inland sea in which Utah and Nevada shared the weight of waters above their valleys, and peeped at the daylight only on the summits of the highest peaks. This was the first bond of union between the two.

## Story of the West.

There is much yet to be written in this wonderful story of the west, and when the tale is fully told such names as Peter Skene Ogden, Kit Carson, Wolfkill, Nedever, Ashley, Jedediah S. Smith and Bonneville, will be rescued from a state of almost oblivion. The story of the northwest secured a hear-



Utah in 1855 Extended From Kansas to California and From Oregon to New Mexico. In 1850, as the Provisional State of Deseret, Its Most Western Boundary Enclosed Several of the Counties of Southern California Including the Present Site of the City of Los Angeles. Its Extreme Southern Boundary Was the Republic of Mexico at that Time.



H. S. BEATTIE.

First White Settler of Nevada and Builder of its First House at Carson City.

ing when the Portland fair was decided upon, and the tale of the southwest was partially told when the Salt Lake and San Pedro railroad followed the old pioneer trail to the coast.

The story of the west—the fighting for a passage through the Humboldt river route over to California, the struggles of the early explorers before the days of gold laid a yellow glamour over all that was done beyond the mountains, are still obscured in the minds of old residents, or lost with the passing of the men who performed the pathfinding work. Here and there in a manuscript or an obscurely printed book of autobiography, the tale is partly told, and is waiting for its hearing before the world.

## A Mythical River.

In the first generation there was little distinction between the Utah and Nevada country. Trappers came into Utah through Cache valley, down the Bear river, or from the south at Utah lake, and then trailed on down the Humboldt, seeking beavers, and incidentally a mythical river known as the Buenaventura, that was supposed to run directly west from Great Salt lake to the Pacific coast. It was a long time before men were finally convinced that the Great Salt lake had no outlet, and once so famous an explorer as Captain Fremont traveled across the east base of the Sierra Nevada seeking this mythical river, and finally allowed his heart to swell with joy as he encountered the Truckee, and thought he had at last found a way to the Pacific out of the great land. In those days there was a curious conclusion of the knicker trapper, Jim Bridger, that figured in the explorations. It was that to beavers ever lived on a stream that did not lead to the ocean, and therefore when rivers were found without beaver dams on them, he resented sure that the rivers were inland and not ocean going.

## Founding of Ogden.

The trappers had their day in the west from 1826 to 1845. In 1826 William H. Ashley built Fort Ashley on Utah lake, and operated a company of 120 trappers from that point. Afterwards Peter Skene Ogden built a fort in Ogden canyon, and thus took from the "Mormon" settlers the credit of making the first human habitations here. Another trapper, Jedediah S. Smith, in this year also became the real European discoverer of the southwest trail to Los Angeles, through Las Vegas in southern Nevada. When that story came to be written the credit seemed at first to belong to the party of "rail blazers" as railroad literature describes them, who went to found San Bernardino colony under Elders Lyman and Rich. Then came John Hunt's story of a trip over this trail, with a party of "Mormons" sent by the church to dig seeds and milk cows. John Hunt in his narrative to the "News," said his party had a map of the route given

them by Peter Skene Ogden, who went over the trail with Kit Carson, so that ran the credit back to Carson.

## Smith's Great Journey.

Now it appears that neither Carson nor Ogden ever went over the trail, but both secured their map of it from Smith, whose heroic venture made him the first white man to enter Nevada, and more than that, the first white man to cross the Sierra Nevada mountains. Curiously enough, this range of mountain walls was crossed from the west to the east, and not in the usual course of emigration going westward.

In August, 1826, it was that Jedediah S. Smith commenced the great journey that made him the first Nevada resident. He started out from the shores of Great Salt lake, and traveled southward past Utah lake with a party of 15 men, and then turned southwest until he encountered an old Spanish trail leading to Los Angeles. When he reached the point west of Great Salt lake, and then started to cross. He climbed what he calls "Mt. Joseph," in the land of the Mokelumne Indians, on May 27, 1827, and for eight days fought his way through the snows into Nevada, with but two companions out of the original 15. Twenty days of marching found him exhausted and starving at the southwest corner of Great Salt lake, but with the rest of crossing Nevada and the Sierras accomplished for the first time.

## The Old Spanish Mines.

One people who engaged in early exploration have left but slight traces of their work, and these were the Spaniards, who, settling at Santa Fe, sent excursions out all over the western country. Father Escalante is remembered as one who pushed into Utah valley, and described Utah lake. A few mining tunnels going by the name of "Spanish Mines" a burro trail here and there, as the southwest trail to California, seem to be all that remain, except the names and ruins of a few missions. Yet Nevada owes something to these men, at least in its nomenclature. "Sierra Nevada" means "Snow-capped Covered with Snow," and "Nevada," snow-capped, remained to be the name of the state, and to share honors with names left by the early military men, the trappers, the explorers, and the "Mormon" settlers.

## Follow the Humboldt.

Of the days in Nevada since the general westward movement began, there is much that is definite on record. In the first place the Humboldt river must be credited with being the father of pioneers and pathfinders for the silent duty it performed in saving and digging its way through the mountains, and making gorges where men might break through the walls, led to the

travel through Nevada. The instructions to early pioneers were to hunt for the Humboldt, find it and follow it to the last sink, then break for the mountains. Capt. Simpson, famous as founder of the "Simpson" route to California, in the early fifties, locates his route principally by its reference to the Humboldt.

## Ogden Discovered It.

And before leaving the work of the Humboldt, it should be known that a great wrong was done to the man who discovered the river, when it got that name. Peter Skene Ogden discovered the stream, and in all the early days it went by the name of Ogden river, or "Mary's river," for he had married an Indian girl, whom he called Mary, and after whom he named the river. Afterwards when the trappers were becoming extinct as a class, Fremont came along and called the river the "Humboldt" which name seemed to stick with the oncoming immigration.

## Salt Lickers at Carson.

It was the close of the Mexican war that diverted attention to the west, and started the movement of which the settlement of Nevada is a part. The signing of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the discovery of gold right afterward, brought to Salt Lake, which had already been settled by Brigham Young, the lucrative trade with the Indians, and as the trains pulled out to the westward, the chance to better took residents of this city along to establish trading posts. The first of these was built in Carson valley, under the direction of H. S. Beattie, who left a party of 30 Salt Lickers bound for the mines, to set up business in the Carson valley. At that time Carson was part of the old state of Deseret, which included Utah, Arizona, portions of Colorado, Wyoming, Oregon and San Diego county, California, in addition to parts of several other California counties.

## Beattie Built First House.

Beattie settled upon the site of his present town of Genoa, and the house he built there was fashioned after the houses on the Missouri frontier with which he was familiar before he came to Utah in 1849. It had no roof, and was what was known as a "double log house," that is a long house with two compartments connected by a covered passage way. Some it was a corral, built for horses and cattle, and this establishment remained for a whole summer as the only buildings in Nevada. With Mr. Beattie in the venture were DeMont, Abner Blackington, brother, Kimball and Carter, men whose first names were not given in the manuscript left by Mr. Beattie, of this first expedition into Nevada. Beattie did not remain long at Carson valley. At the end of the summer he sold his first house to a man named Moore and came back to Salt Lake to make his home. He lived here afterwards until his death some years ago, and is the father of Bishop Walter J. Beattie of the Seventeenth ward and of H. S. Beattie of Z. C. M. L.

In 1851 the trading business had prospered until about 20 trading posts were established along the route through Carson valley, most of them owned by miners from California who had given up the quest of gold.

## Disease Claimed Many.

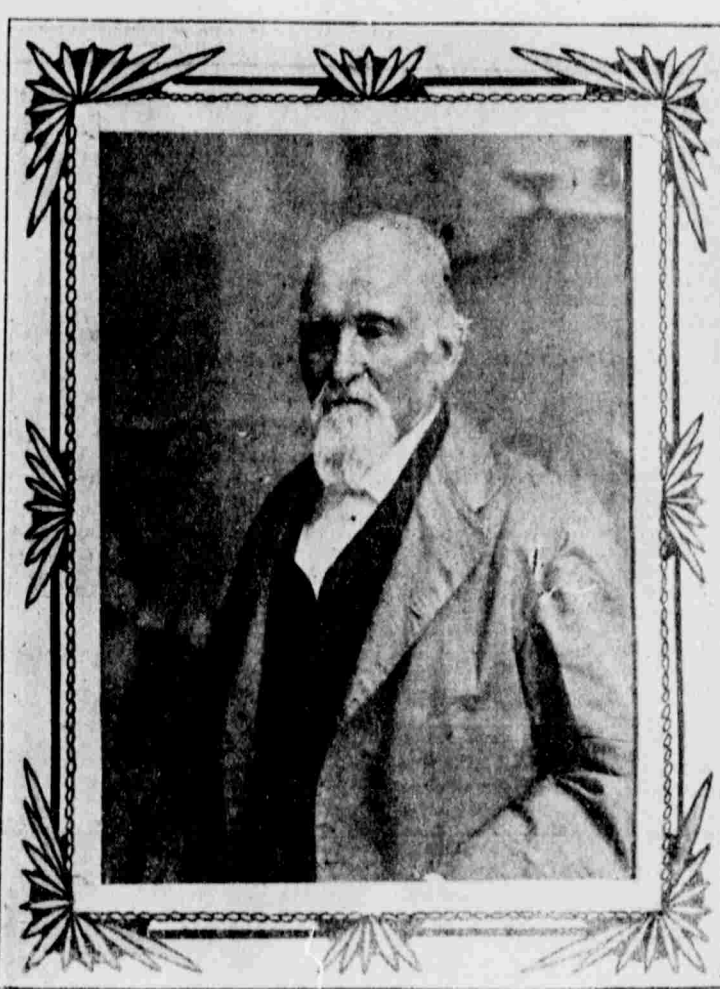
The business was a thrifty one, but retarded by a disease similar to cholera which killed many of the immigrants and traders, whose shacks were made of willows, and were only temporary affairs. In 1852, however, the first substantial trading post and station was built, and it was on the site of the Beattie house, erected by John Reese, a brother of Enoch Reese. The Reese boys had come to Utah in 1849, and had been business at Salt Lake as the firm of E. and J. Reese. After leaving Nevada they returned to Utah and a number of their descendants are living in Salt Lake now.

## "Mormon" Station.

Reese's station was famous during the fifties, and was known on the old route maps as "Mormon Station." So start it he hauled from Salt Lake 19



NEVADA'S FIRST PERMANENT HOUSE.



JOHN REESE.

Salt Lake Man Who Built the First Permanent House in Nevada Which is Still Standing.

wagon loads of flour, butter, eggs, and other marketable articles, and took with him a company of 16 men, all but five or six of whom continued on into California. At the eastern end of the Carson valley he stopped for a party, and founded "Rag Town," the camping place taking this name from the debris left by the campers on moving west.

## First Church Colony.

So far the presence of "Mormons" in Nevada had been without the direction of the church leaders, and on the initiative of members, but the time came when the little colony at Genoa, which was so named by Orson Hyde, the first probate judge of the valley, in honor of the birthplace of Christopher Columbus, was augmented by a party of about 70 families, called by their church to found a colony in Carson county.

## Return to Utah.

The operations of this colony were called to a sudden and unexpected halt by the approach of Johnson's army to Utah, and in this crisis the government and safety of residents of Carson county, fell with the departing colonists. Brigham Young called his people in from all the world in those uncertain days of '57 and '58 and among those to respond in common with the San Bernardino and Las Vegas missions, were the settlers of Carson valley. How the first start in Nevada was crushed by the approach of Johnson's army to Utah, and how the state was born again and rose to fame on the fortunes of the mighty Comstock lode, is quite another story that is out of place here.

## The Carson Government.

But of the early attempts at government in Carson valley there is still something to be told. The tale is of attempts to get annexed to Utah, and finally of a long and disputatious quarrel with California over the western boundary line, which at the

his connection with Carson valley. He was a guide for Capt. Simpson when the famous Simpson route was opened, and in his honor the captain named Reese river, reciprocating in a way for "Simpson springs" which were named by Reese in honor of Capt. Simpson, when he discovered them. In the Smithsonian institute is a large rattlesnake which Reese found coiled on his chest one night when a cold feeling awakened him from sleep. He was once captured by the Hanocks and a fire was prepared on which to burn him to death, but Chief Jim, whom he had once befriended and who afterwards was a famous visitor at Washington in the days when Indian treaties were being made, arrived just in time to rescue him. His old age was spent in Salt Lake although relatives of his still live in Carson valley, where his first permanent house is still to be seen.

## Founding of Carson City.

In the year 1852, Carson City was founded. A group of miners came over to try their luck in 1851, and failing to find paying diggings, took up the land where Carson stands, and erected a trading post. One of the men, Frank Hall, killed an eagle and tacked the skin on his cabin door, from which incident the place came to be known as "Eagle Station" through the pioneer days.

As the trappers and traders gradually took hold of the situation, they tried again to be annexed to California, and this failing took up a long battle for separate organization as a territory. This was turned down year after year in Congress, and when the troubles in Utah were finally settled, another attempt was made by the new governor, sent from Washington, to establish control over Carson county. Gov. Cummins sent Judge Gradelbaugh to welcome as the people did not want to be welcomed, as he people did not want to remain a part of Utah, on account both of the hostility to the "Mormon" people, and the remoteness of Salt Lake.

## Cut From Utah.

The Comstock lode was discovered while the dispute was in progress and with its discovery came the rush of new people which caused President Buchanan to smile upon the petitions of the people for a territorial government, and on the 2nd of March, 1861, two days before retiring from office, to affix his signature to a congressional bill, taking from Utah her western half and making out of it her sister, or more properly, her daughter territory of Nevada, which has ever since maintained an intimate but independent relationship with her neighbor on the eastern border.

## Mormon Towns in Nevada.

A BRANCH of the Church colonies that has been very little known to the people in general, is that located in Nevada today. The older settlements at Carson valley passed in to history along with the Las Vegas and San Bernardino missions, but today there are no less than six thriving Church colonies in Nevada. They are located in the southern part of the state, and are a portion of the St. George stake, of which Edward H. Snow is president, with headquarters at St. George, Utah.

The settlements are located along the White River valley, on the Muddy river and on the Virgin river. They are all

thriving and prosperous, and each numbers over 200 souls.

Lund and Preston, named in honor of President Anthon H. Lund and Bishop W. B. Preston, were founded in 1890 on the White river, the land having been procured for the colonists through the organization of the Nevada Land & Livestock company, of which President Lund and Bishop Preston were members. Both are thriving, and will soon have agricultural products in abundance for the Utah and Nevada markets. Bunkerville, of which Edward M. Bunker is Bishop, is located on the Virgin river, while Mesquite, Overton, and Panaca are on the Muddy. All have been organized within the past decade, and are among the newest Church colonies.

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