

Some Plain Truths

Told of Early Utah by One Who Was Here—Some Interesting Facts for Later Comers to Ponder in Their Minds.

Should a stranger in Utah listen to some of those who speak of its first settlement and believe all he heard, he would think the pioneers found a veritable paradise; a land of green and waving meadows, a land of milk and honey, a soil so rich it needed but a touch to produce most beautiful harvests. And when vice-president Colfax years later beheld the southern transformation—a desert become a garden—he said with a sneer, "It was just a little water! a little water had done it all!" Neither he nor others today of similar small caliber could appreciate the toil, hardships, starvation, discouragements and deadly perils endured and conquered by the heroic settlers. Such cannot understand what it is to live months at a time on bread, mush, green weeds and roots, with not an ounce of meat or groceries of any kind. Yet this was the experience of multitudes.

Travelers passing to California said Utah was good for nothing but to obviate a big hole in the ground; it was a country utterly worthless; and the Mormons were the biggest fools in the world for staying in such a place. I heard such expressions many times. But years of required constant permission of the church leaders to keep the Saints in Utah, yet many went to California to seek a better home. In a discourse of President Young delivered in Ogden February 17th, 1845—nearly nine years after the advent of the pioneers—he said:

"I saw (in Nauvoo) that this people would have to live into the mountains and into a climate and country that the Gentiles would not desire. If we are not in such a place I do not know where it will be found—a place more undesirable than this. Do the Saints delight in this locality? No, it is repugnant to their feelings."

And it was repugnant—deeply so—but the majority remained here, because they knew the will of the Lord required it. And this was one of the keys to explain the marvelous endurance and perseverance displayed in the settlement of a dreary desert hundreds of miles from any outside aid and surrounded by hordes of most cruel savages.

When I entered Utah in July, 1890, the landscape was as desolate as are today the deserts of Wyoming and Nevada. Not a bit of green to cheer the eye except a thin fringe of willows along the streams, aside from the limited average under cultivation. The bench between the mouth of Peck's Canyon and the city was covered—not with grass, but with a dense growth of dwarf sunflowers, among which passed Indian women loading with peludes the ripe seeds into baskets for winter food.

Our party of gold hunters camped while on the Jordan to feed the cattle and obtain supplies, and here for the

first time I realized the comparatively small value of money. When we bargained for butter, vegetables, milk or other supplies and offered gold in payment, people said sullenly, "Couldst thou let me have some sugar instead of money?"—a little tea or coffee—some bacon or dried fruit? We haven't had any for such a long time—it would be so much better than money! Such words were common; the people had gold but they could not eat it, and they hungered for something besides bread and milk.

After a few days our party went on to California—all but myself who remained behind to study Mormonism—a subject entirely new to me. And what I now saw was to me very strange. I saw so many lawyers, but instead, people both Mormon and Gentiles, settling disputes before a bishop's court or a High Council—attorneys, too. When people were sick doctors were not sent for, but the Elders came and through faith the sick were healed, for often this is the case today. And what was very strange dances and business meetings were opened and closed with prayer; and while the dances rested from time to time at a halt Elders spoke, filled by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Some prophesied, some spoke of sang in tongues, and others gave the interpretation. Many times a dancing party witnessed as powerful a manifestation of the Holy Spirit as a Sunday morning, and a spirit presided just as heavenly. This was all marvelous to me, who had always supposed such things pertained only to a strictly religious meeting. I did not then know that with God and His servants all things are spiritual, and that the Gospel applies to and should regulate not only our religious duties of a Sunday, but every act and avocation in life. Seeing a whole community imbued with such a spirit, I could partially understand how they could face with such undiminished courage difficulties calculated to appall the stoutest heart.

I lived many years in Utah before I saw a note of hand given, or a receipt for money paid. To ask for either would have been taken as an insult to one's honesty of character. When a man agreed to pay a debt he expected to pay it, and when he did pay his debt he waited no receipt. "No business in that," says he, very likely, but there was honesty on each side,—much more reliable than a bond or note of hand.

I often rode over the country now known as Roundland and would not have given ten cents an acre for it, nor would any one else, because there was no water for it. Four or five families claimed it, and without water nothing would grow. Can anyone realize this when looking today over the thousands of acres of fields, orchards and waving meadows in Davis county? Yet it is all true, not only in Davis county, but from one end of Utah to the other. Some streams have increased in volume, the rainfall has greatly increased, and many running springs have broken out where water never ran before. For instance, in 1857 the winter traveling in southern Utah in company with Apostles George A. Smith, Amasa Lyman and others, and

stopped for lunch at noon at a small spring which ran about thirty feet and all disappeared in the sand. To get a drink we had to dip up a spoonful at a time until a cup was filled. In 1881 I passed the same place again and saw a well, orchards, gardens and a small field, all watered from the spring formerly so diminutive. Many other examples may be given if necessary.

As a key to this I here insert a prophecy made by President Heber C. Kimball in Panguitch, May 17th 1831, at the meeting when the name "Panguitch" was substituted for "Lamon"—its first name. He said: "As the numbers and necessities of the Saints in these mountain valleys shall increase, so shall the waters increase. Write it down if you will, for it is true." I wrote it down at the time and have seen it literally fulfilled.

JAMES H. MARTINDALE.

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JENSON'S TRAVELS.

(Continued from Page Ten.)

about two miles in width, and both are surrounded by a great number of moats which rest upon the coral reef. Tahaa is about half the size of Raiatea and is not so fertile. Captain Cook visited this island in his boat in 1773, and Lieutenant Fanning was sent around it by him in a boat in 1775.

Borabora is distinguished by a very busy double peaked mountain, which rises in the midst of and reaches far above the surrounding hills. It is crowned by a square piece of rock which appears as if placed there by human hands, though no human foot has ever reached the summit. Borabora is about eight miles northwest of Tahaa, to which it is inferior in extent, but the reef with which it is surrounded is nearly half a mile larger than those which are situated among the reefs that in close Raiatea and Tahaa. Borabora is a low island which surrounds the whole, together with the islands on the reef, are very productive. Its earliest inhabitants are said to have been malefactors, banished from the neighboring islands. Captain Cook did not land here upon his first or second voyage, and in 1777 he was prevented from anchoring in the harbor by contrary winds. On its west side is Vaitape, the port of Tahiti, to which the distance from Tahiti is about one hundred and fifty miles.

Borabora, as well as Raiatea, Raiatea and Tahaa, was visited by Ellis Nosh Rogers in the latter part of 1894, but the natives, influenced by sectarian missionaries, would not receive him as a Latter-day Saint missionary. I believe no attempt has been made by any of our Elders to preach on Borabora since 1849. According to French official reports the island of Borabora has about 600 inhabitants at the present time. Raiatea has about 1,500 and Raiatea and Tahaa together about 3,000 inhabitants.

Motu is the northernmost of the Society Islands, proper, and consists of some very small, low islands, connected by a reef, about two miles north of Tahiti, and about 100 miles from the main group. It has no permanent inhabitants, but is a very fertile island.

Maupiti, or Maru, is the westernmost

of the Society Islands proper. It is forty miles northwest of Raiatea, and is constantly visible from the lower hills of that island. It is about 100 miles from Tahiti. The island is composed of hills wooded to their summit, and occasionally crested by coconut trees, but presenting rugged and mountainous features. The island is a rocky mass on the southwest side which rises 700 feet above the sea, resembling the trunk of a gigantic cactus. The population of the island is small, the principal village is situated on the southeast side. The island is surrounded by a coral barrier reef at a distance of about three miles, enclosing numerous small islets covered with coconut trees. The island which is situated in the center of the reef is about 100 feet high.

On learning of the disaster of the Julia Ann, on the 20th of January, 1895, the King of Raiatea, in response to a petition by Elder John McCarthy and others, dispatched two lieutenants to the Society Islands to the purpose of taking off the coastward "emigrants," but on arriving there they found that Captain Poni, who had chartered the schooner Emma Packer at Raiatea, had been there twelve hours before and taken the people away. Elder McCarthy then returned with his schooner to Raiatea, where he commenced to preach the Gospel. He found over with the King, Tapor, and his three sons, who were all very much impressed by his testimony. After about three weeks' stay on Raiatea, Elder McCarthy sailed for the island of Raiatea.

This was in December, 1855.

Selly Island consists of a number of very low islets or motus lying on a coral reef which measures about fifteen miles in circumference. The easternmost islet is in latitude 16° 10' south, longitude 155° 15' west, or about 150 miles west of Raiatea and 300 miles northwest of Tahiti. Besides the circular reef comprising the island, a narrow reef extends in a westerly direction for many miles, and the whole reef system constitutes a very dangerous locality for navigation. It is on the hidden reef on the west and about twelve miles from the island reef that the ill-fated bark Julia Ann on route from Australia to America was wrecked several weeks (most of them just two months) on the uninhabited island existing on tortle and brackish water. They were finally taken off by the Emma Packer, a schooner, which Captain Poni had chartered for the purpose at Raiatea. The Selly Island was discovered by Wain in 1841.

About fifty miles southeast of Selly

islet lies Mopelia, another coral island about ten miles long by four broad, discovered by Wallis in 1807, and about fifty miles southeast of Selly island is Irlinghausen Island, which is also a low, uninhabited coral island, triangular in form and richly covered with tropical vegetation. These three last named islands do not properly belong to the Society group, but as they belong to no other group geographically and they are now claimed by French possessions and counted by French officials as members of the Society Islands, I have also described them under that head in this article.

ANDREW JENSON.

SANAE, RAKHARA, TUMOTOI ISLANDS, February 20th, 1896.

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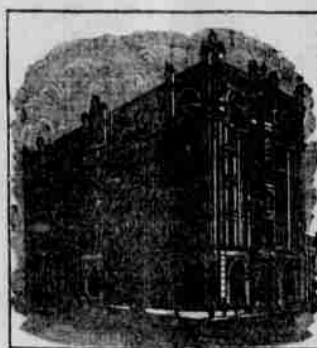
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