

REMARKABLE STORY OF DAVID LEWIS.

MAN WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE LIVED IN UTAH PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE PIONEERS IN 1847.

CLAIMING fellowship with the men who lived in what is undoubtedly the most neglected period of Utah and of western history, and declaring that City Creek canyon was familiar ground to him when it was so blocked up with beaver dams that the water could hardly find its way down to the open plain below, David Lewis this week is telling a story of trapper days in the Wasatch that adds much to their own history.

David Lewis is an old man over 90 years of age, and almost blind. His memory, however, is clear, and it runs back over events of the utmost importance in the development of western history. He is a pioneer of Utah of 1847, and says that in addition to this trip he was here in 1836 and again a few years before the Latter-day Saint immigration made the permanent settlements.

The gentleman's memory may not be perfect as to dates, but the tale he tells of trapper ways, shows him to be a letter perfect in its mode of conduct, and of each of the men known to have gone through here in the period he represents as his own. He has a word of remembrance and a familiar knowledge.

In Utah life he dropped out of sight immediately after the settlement was made, through going back to his mountain ways, instead of taking to the hoe and bag of seed. After years of absence in the mountains and in Nevada, he recently came back, blind and infirm, to receive treatment for his eyes, at the Dr. Groves' L. D. S. hospital. There he told his story to Dr. Stookley, who attended him, and who called the attention of Dr. James E. Talmage to it. By him, in turn, it was referred to O. F. Whitney, author of the History of Utah, and to the Church historian's office.

One remarkable article of the story is the declaration that the Prophet Joseph asked him in 1836 to join the western trappers and come out to the Great Basin country, to look up and record the size of all the springs, the area of the inhabitable valleys, the location of the mountain passes, and take careful notes of the general lay of the land. This, he says, was when he was 18 years of age. He was baptized into the Church when it was only a little over a month old. This would make him the oldest living member, in point of years since joining the Church, an honor until now supposed to have been held by Lorin Farr.

Upon matters of Church history, his statements have been given careful attention at the historian's office, where it is still being investigated, with the conclusion that in the main it can be corroborated, although dates are not yet fully established. The conclusions of the investigation will be made the subject of future treatment, but in the meantime, the old veteran's story which replaces him as one of the pioneers, and as a Pathfinder preceding the pioneer era, is here given, just as he tells it from memory.

MEETING WITH JIM BRIDGER.

"My start in western life was with a lot of powder," he said to a reporter who talked with him in his Salt Lake rooms. "When I walked into the American Fur company's headquarters in St. Joe, Missouri, to ask for employment in the mountains, in pursuance of an advertisement posted up on the outside of the office, I was talking to the agent when a gun was fired off close to my ear.

"If you shoot another time like that," I said angrily to a man standing beside me when I turned around, "I'll knock you down."

"I guess you're a fellow, you'll stand gun fire if you'll stand without jumping when the firing's that close," was the answer from the man who had fired, and then the agent there, but were attacked by the Sioux and abandoned the plan. Then we went over to the Big Sioux river, where the Sioux again attacked us, and we had three men wounded, but none killed.

"After that we went up on to the Yellowstone, and followed the river up into the mountains. Finally we had to leave it and take a trail over the peaks. We were three days up there without water, and we suffered a good deal. After that we got down into the Grosvenor country, and to a spring of melted rock, it looked like, where we could put our ramrods in, and bring them out coated with mud of every color, and into Montana and treated with the Sioux and Snakes—Shoshones they called themselves. The Shoshones were at war with the Sioux, and we joined the Shoshones, helping them in the fight. After it was over they told Capt. Bridger that the blood of a white man had never yet stained a Shoshone's hands and feet, and they were proud of their record for peace and wanted to keep it up.

INTO SALT LAKE VALLEY.

"In the late summer we got to where Fort Bridger now is, and started the erection of a small 'house' of logs, to shelter us through the winter. Leaving some of the party there

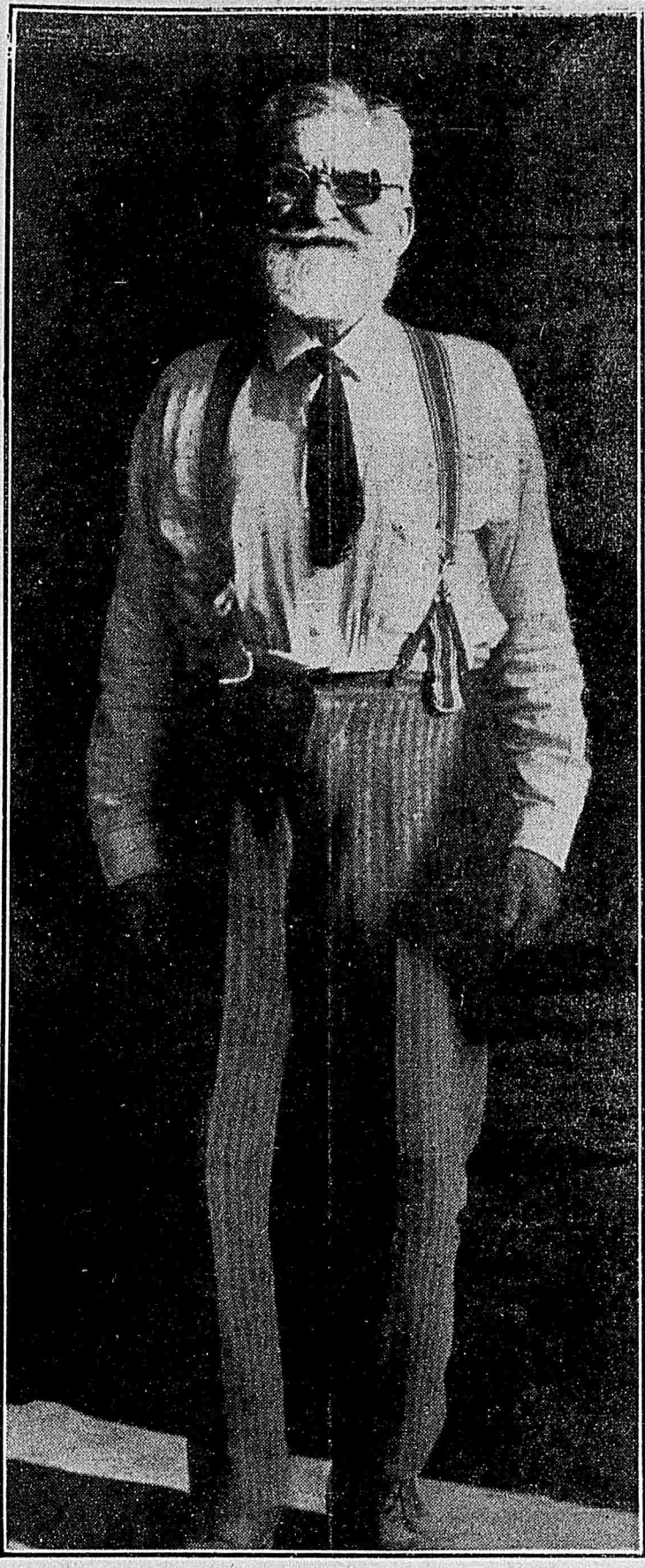
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DANGER SIGNAL NO. 1 comes from the kidney secretions. Salt water when the kidneys are sick. Well kidneys excrete a clear, amber fluid. Sick kidneys send out a thick, pale and foamy, full of sediment and irregular of passage.

DANGER SIGNAL NO. 2 comes from the back. Back pains, dull and heavy, or sharp and cutting, tell you of sick kidneys and warn you of the approach of dropsy, diabetes and Bright's disease. Doan's Kidney Pills cure sick kidneys and cure them permanently. Here's Salt Lake City proof: Mrs. M. J. Stevens, living at 1217 West Third South St., Salt Lake City, Utah, says: "For over thirty years I suffered from kidney complaint, and there have been times when I really thought I would have to give up. My back ached, my head was dizzy, and I was constantly getting headaches, being often so dizzy that I could not attend to my household duties. At last I learned of Doan's Kidney Pills and procured a box at F. J. Hill's drug store. I am now feeling better than I have in a long time and trust that others may learn of the curative powers of Doan's Kidney Pills through my endorsement."

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DAVID LEWIS.

Last of the Old Western Trappers With Jim Bridger.

to work on the fort, the rest of us pushed on into the Great basin to trap through the fall.

"This was my introduction to the Great Basin country. We came through Becho canyon, and over the route subsequently followed by the pioneers, except that in coming over Big mountain we climbed it at steeper ascent than the trail afterwards followed. We came over Little mountain, and had to cut our way through Emigration canyon, the brush was so thick.

"You'd be surprised at the beaver there were in these Utah streams. Why I remember City creek was so dammed up with beaver dams that the water could hardly get through. Down on the Weber the beavers worked right out to the last cottonwoods.

"In those days we found cottonwoods just a few miles from where the Weber goes into the lake, and at these cottonwoods one night I put in seven traps, all a trapper is furnished by the company, and in the morning had seven beaver in them."

WHO WAS WEBER?

"Who was Weber?" was a pertinent question. Henry M. Chittenden, who has written a history of the fur trade, throwing a flood of light upon early events in the mountain states, states that no record is extant, that has come under his notice, giving any data about Weber nor why the river should be named from him.

"Old Dan Weber" was the immediate answer. "He was in the country a few years before I came," Bridger told me about him often, and always spoke well of him, saying he was a good man. I supposed from this he was an American Fur company man. Bridger told me he struck the Weber river in the Kansas prairie country, and was the first trapper to follow it down to its outlet in the lake. So they gave the stream his name, just as they gave the Ogden river the name of Peter Sken Ogden, who was the first man to go up into Ogden canyon and trap out the stream of beaver."

WHERE OGDEN GOT NAME.

A demand to know more about Ogden was pressed. Ogden, according to Chittenden and Bancroft, was no American, but is a man who links Utah history up with the British development of the west, and the keen competition between Great Britain, Russia, Mexico and the United States to secure this western country, in the era preceding the Mexican war.

Ogden's presence in Utah is represented as a phase of the competition for furs that led to the establishment of Astoria by John Jacob Astor, the looting of Astoria by the British company, under M. T. Vassil, who rushed down the Columbia river, and the first trapper to follow it down to its outlet in the lake. So they gave the stream his name, just as they gave the Ogden river the name of Peter Sken Ogden, who was the first man to go up into Ogden canyon and trap out the stream of beaver."

know him better than the others, and whenever he got out the Fort Bridger way, which was often, he stopped with us, and we were always glad to have him come.

"I heard from the trappers that he felt mighty bad about the stealing of his furs at some time or other, and told me he beat a man so badly once, for being mixed up in stealing them that the man died from the effects of it."

MATTER OF HISTORY.

A matter of unsettled western history is that connected with the origin of the name of Smith's Fork of the Bear river. That the Britishers named the Bear river and lake is certain from the fact that as early as 1824 there are letters on record from British trappers writing from the "Black Bear Lake." After Ashley made his fortune in 1825, and returned to the States, partly caught by the Britishers, he sold out to three of his trappers, Bridger then being one of the younger men, and J. W. Smith, William L. Sublette, and David Jackson, becoming the partners to the new ownership. The bill of sale was for goods in Ashley's fork on Utah lake, and was dated July 18, 1825, "near the Grand lake west of the Rocky mountains." It is still in existence and will some day become a document of distinct importance in Utah history.

JEDEDIAH SMITH.

Perhaps no mountain man has suffered more complete obliteration than Jedediah Smith who headed the new company. He was first across the Sierras, the first to cross the summit of the great basin, as members of his own expedition were first over the eastern and northern rims, and was the real Pathfinder of the trail long after the name known as the "Mormon" trail from Salt Lake to Los Angeles, at present followed by the Salt Lake Route in part.

Chittenden hoped that he was remembered in the name of Smith's fork of the Bear river, but was uncertain of the point, as "there was another Smith in the mountains at the time."

"I never heard of Jedediah Smith," said Mr. Lewis when asked specifically as to the name of this branch of bear river. "He was before my time. I knew Peg Leg Smith, however. I encountered him living in a good log fort on this stream. It had port holes in it and was fixed up for a vigorous defense. I am sure that the stream was named from Peg Leg Smith, and not from Jedediah Smith."

Two years ago there came to the "News" office to correct a statement about Jim Bridger, another veteran of the mountain generation. This was Joshua Terry, now living at Draper. The story told by Mr. Lewis concerning Bridger's leaving Ft. Bridger during the Black Hawk Indian war, coincides exactly with that then told by Terry.

"The Mormon settlements were being raided by Black Hawk," declared Mr.

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Lewis, "and he was getting his ammunition from somewhere. We got word at the fort that Mormon militiamen had secured evidence to the effect that Bridger was furnishing it, and Bridger left the fort before any came to arrest him. He had a secret trail through the mountains independent of all the wagon routes, and he went clear across Wyoming to Laramie without ever once getting on to the

"I was with Bridger all the time, and I know he gave his men the strictest orders not to sell to Indians of Black Hawk's tribe for any price. I can show you how they got their ammunition, however. The friendly Shoshones bought the fort as usual, and then sold to Black Hawk at a price three times as great. That's how he got it, and the militiamen, knowing their ammunition came from the direction of Ft. Bridger suspected him of selling it. After he left his partner, Vasquez sold the fort to Louis Robinson, of the militia, but Bridger went on down to Laramie and sold it to the government, taking a position of chief scout for their expeditions, which he held from the time coming back into Utah as the guide for Johnston's army."

"When the militiamen came out to Bridger there was a Frenchman there we called 'Big Bill.' He sassed the soldiers and when they told him to halt he refused, and they fired upon him. I came up to help him after he fell, and Robinson asked if he had any message he wanted sent anywhere. 'If anyone asks about Big Bill,' he said, 'just tell them he went to it with a lead mine of his own to keep him company.'

There is a record made by Etienne Provost, from whom the city of Provo and the Provo river are named, that in the fall of 1823 he was set upon near the mouth of the Snake river by a band of Snake Indians under a chief named Mauvais Gauche, and a massacre resulted in which all but himself and three companions out of 21 men were slaughtered, the massacre beginning while the whites were seated smoking the pipe of peace with the Indians.

Therefore the story of Mr. Lewis that in 1837 he had a hard fight with Indians on what is now known as Bat Creek, north of Springville, has historical confirmation, at least to the point of making that country a bad Indian section.

WAS A BAD INDIAN.

"This Walker was a bad Indian long before he fought with Brigham Young, declared Mr. Lewis. You never could depend upon him. My own trouble began during a trading trip. Bridger had sent me in with 28 men and a trading outfit, and told me to start trading until I saw Walker and got his permission, so there would be no trouble. He pledged his word that he wanted peace, and then just as the trading was at its height, he slipped his hand over his mouth and came at one of our traders on a full run, the others joining with him.

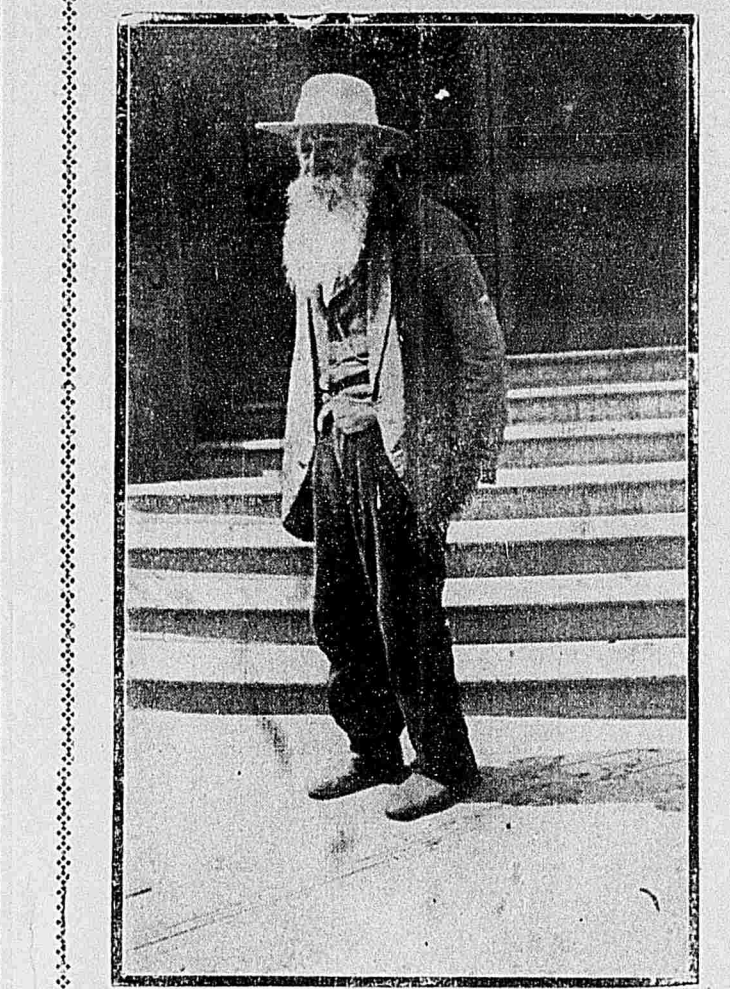
"That means war," said the man nearest to me, and I answered, 'here's where I would as soon die for an old sheep as a lamb, and opened fire on Walker. With this he and his Indians slipped over the brow of a hill, and we quickly prepared our encampment for a fight. It was a case of bluff away every time anyone showed himself, and pretty soon a flag of truce appeared in a new direction. Up came a bunch of Mexicans from Santa Fe. They told me they had best back-track Walker who had stolen their cattle and horses, and wanted to join us in the fight, declaring they had been guided to us by the word of our arms."

Well, we left the Indians to the Mexicans and pulled off up the canyon, figuring that the Indians would take to the road as soon as they got a water somewhere in those Grand canyon mountains.

DEATH OF WILD MULE.

Coming back on the other side of the river, he thought he would find water, and we had three kegs of it packed on a wild mule when we started to cross the White mountain. The other pack mules gradually gave out. We

Pymont mentions this Walker again, in the pre-pioneer period, as does also



JOSHUA TERRY.

As He Was Photographed Outside the Deseret News Recently.

Thomas J. Farnham, who traveled along the Green river country in 1839 and published a book of his travels in 1842. These references, together with sermons of Brigham Young, and a book on Indian experiences by Daniel W. Jones, show that for years preceding the pioneer era there was an active slave trade carried on in Utah, in which business Indian Walker took slaves from the Pah-Ute and Digger Indians and sold them to Mexicans who came in through Sanpete valley over a well developed trail to get them for selling in Santa Fe and Taos. The Walker war of Utah history followed the breaking up of this trade and its prohibition by Gov. Brigham Young, as one of the early acts of his career in Utah. Upon this trade and the bitterness in Walker's heart following its prohibition, Mr. Lewis throws much light, but that is a matter worthy of special treatment by itself, and can only be mentioned here.

Asked what was the greatest hardship in which he participated Mr. Lewis quickly came to a decision. "It was with Jim Bridger," he said, "on our way back to Fort Bridger from a trip down the Colorado river to its mouth, we got stuck in the mud. We got down all right," he said, "All the way Capt. Bridger kept watching the mountain tops for signs of water, he figured that there must be water somewhere in those Grand canyon mountains."

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became famished, and on trying to catch our wild mule we couldn't. We chased him till we were worn out, and then he tried to rush past me when I had him almost cornered. Shoot him, shouted Bridger. He should have shouted 'Rope him,' because I had my jaws in my hand, but hearing him shout 'shoot him,' I pulled my revolver and fired. Well that mule fell heavy on the water kegs and smashed every one of them, we running up in time to see the water soaking into the sand. We sucked the staves of the kegs, and gathered up the wet sand, and putting the handful in our handkerchiefs, squeezed it for the water that would drip into our mouths. Then our horses gave out, and we were on foot in dry country. We footed it for White mountain. Finally my tongue stuck out of my mouth and swelled until it completely filled the mouth, and it turned as black as tar.

And then at last we came to a slough at the base of the White mountain. I couldn't drink a drop, my tongue was so swollen, but I laid down in the slough and rolled over in it, and I staid there all night and gradually got where I could get a little water down. Next morning, as good as the water had seemed at night, it was unfit to drink for it was almost pure alkali. We followed on up the slough to a spring, where the water was good, and we rested up. Then we crossed the Colorado by swimming it, near where Williams' ranch was. Old man Williams was there then, and he gave us a great welcome. Bridger got some Navajos to trade with him for horses and although we had nothing to pay with, the Navajos gave us the animals, and sent some Indians over to Fort

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GAME EXTERMINATED.

In pioneer history there are few tales of migrant hunting, and great returns from expeditions after game. Lewis says, he has also of Jack Robinson, who was located at Brown's hole in the Green river valley, and William L. Sublette, from whom Sublette cut-off is named, of the Prophet Joseph too, he recalls much, and says that he was his guide on the western trip which he proposed shortly before his assassination, from which he was summoned back by friends from Nauvoo. Mr. Lewis was born in 1818, and his great grandfather, he says, came over in the Mayflower. His story, in its particulars dealing with the Walker and Black Hawk wars is fully as interesting as that of pre-pioneer days, and may in its turn, with that of the Santa Fe trade into Utah, receive separate treatment.

KNEW THEM ALL.

Of Miles Goodwyler, who had a fort on the Ogden city flats when the pioneers came in 1847, Mr. Lewis has much to tell, as he has also of Jack Robinson, who was located at Brown's hole in the Green river valley, and William L. Sublette, from whom Sublette cut-off is named, of the Prophet Joseph too, he recalls much, and says that he was his guide on the western trip which he proposed shortly before his assassination, from which he was summoned back by friends from Nauvoo. Mr. Lewis was born in 1818, and his great grandfather, he says, came over in the Mayflower. His story, in its particulars dealing with the Walker and Black Hawk wars is fully as interesting as that of pre-pioneer days, and may in its turn, with that of the Santa Fe trade into Utah, receive separate treatment.

IN THE MEANTIME AN INSPECTION

of what is recorded of Jim Bridger will perhaps throw much interesting light on the exploring trip through the Yellowstone in the summer of 1836, and the other trip down the Colorado.

Capt. Stansbury, who surveyed Great Salt Lake in 1849-1850, and Lieut. Greaves, who worked the shore lines on the east side under his supervision, both wrote much of Bridger, and among other things expressed astonishment that with a piece of charcoal on a deer skin he could make maps of any portion of the mountains south of the Yellowstone they could make.

This narrative of Mr. Lewis, given above, throws much light on the wanderings of Bridger while accumulating the power which the government valued so highly, and which brought him the position of scout and interpreter in his mellow years.

ISAAC RUSSELL.

A BURNED CHILD

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