

AN ANSWER

TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO THE HISTORY AND DOCTRINE OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND THE SETTLEMENT AND PROGRESS OF UTAH TERRITORY.

(Continued.)

In 1848, President Young arrived again in Salt Lake valley with about eight hundred wagons.

The crickets, during the season of 1848, came down from the mountains in myriads and destroyed a great portion of the scanty crops; and, notwithstanding every effort was made to drive them off by means of bushes, long rods, etc., whole families and neighborhoods turning out en masse until almost exhausted, the whole would have been destroyed had not the Almighty in His kindness sent gulls in vast numbers, covering every field, driving the crickets from the crops into the streams and even into door yards, and devouring them until crammed, then vomiting them and devouring more.

Notwithstanding the Mormon Battalion had been in the service of the United States, those of their families which were located at Winter Quarters were required, by the Indian Department, in the Spring of 1848, to leave their cabins and recross the river into Iowa. Yet it was well known they were only encamped there awaiting the return of their husbands, fathers and brothers, who had been discharged on the Pacific coast, without means of transportation or rations.

GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALIFORNIA.

In the Spring of 1848, some members of the Mormon Battalion discovered gold in California; thus opening to the world an unparalleled source of wealth and adventure.

LOG TABERNACLE CONFERENCE.

At a General Conference held at the log Tabernacle in December, 1847, at Kanesville, Iowa, the Saints acknowledged Brigham Young President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards his counselors. This action was confirmed at the General Conference held in Salt Lake Valley after the companies arrived in the Fall of 1848; John Smith was chosen Patriarch over the whole Church, and in February, 1849, Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow and Franklin D. Richards were ordained to fill the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

CHURCH AUTHORITIES.

The Church authorities then stood as follows: Brigham Young, President; Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards, counselors; Orson Hyde, President of the Twelve Apostles; Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, Amasa M. Lyman, Ezra T. Benson, Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, and Franklin D. Richards, members of the Quorum of the Twelve; John Smith, Patriarch; Daniel Spencer, President of the Stake of Salt Lake, and Newell K. Whitney, Presiding Bishop.

ORGANIZATION AND CAMP RULES.

Our companies for the plains were organized at the Elk Horn river, about 18 miles west of Winter Quarters, now Florence, Nebraska, into companies of hundreds, fifties and tens; each fifty was provided with a blacksmith and wagon maker with tools for repairing wagons and shoeing animals. Three hundred pounds of breadstuff were required for each person emigrating, and a good gun with 100 rounds of ammunition for each armed man. Many cows were worked in the yoke, each family was also required to take a due proportion of seed grain, and agricultural implements. Every wagon, load and team was assigned by a committee, and they were not allowed to start on to the plains without the required outfit. A strict guard was kept over the cattle by night and day, and also in the camps which were formed in an oval shape, the inside making a corral for the stock. Pigs and poultry were carried in coops attached to the wagons.

No person was allowed by the rules to wander about even to hunt game except in special directions, and by these precautions no person was lost, and but few accidents occurred, and the loss of animals was small, although we traveled ten hundred and thirty miles from the Missouri river to Salt Lake City, through an uninhabited and desert region. Saturday afternoon was usually occupied washing, baking, repairing wagons and shoeing animals, and Sunday was a day of rest and worship. Morning and evening prayers and songs of praise were never omitted in the camps; and occasionally a dance was enjoyed, the companies generally being favored with musical talent.

Thus the refining influences of society and civilization were continually felt, and kept in view, and the moral status of the camps preserved inviolate through all the fatigues, hardships, and exposures, and various annoyances of the entire journey.

BREAD REGULATIONS.

For about three years every head of a family issued his bread-stuff in rations daily varying from one quarter to one pound per soul according to the amount of provisions he had on hand; most of the time the rations were from one half to three-fourths of a pound, sometimes accompanied with vegetables and milk; but if without these, the bread was not increased, for it was necessary that it should be made to last until harvest. This order of things continued until the population increased to over 12,000, when in 1850 an abundant harvest put an end to the necessity of rationing. In 1853, most of the crops were destroyed by grasshoppers and drought, compelling the people to subsist principally upon the surplus of previous years, and the adoption again of the system of rationing, which continued until the harvest of 1856. In addition to the loss of crops by grasshoppers vast numbers of cattle died in consequence of the severity of the winter of 1855-6, materially lessening the quantity of food. During these periods great numbers of gold hunters en route for California came into the valley destitute of food, who were fed and aided on their way from our scanty supplies. In all these times of scarcity measures were taken to supply those who were unable to supply themselves. Fast days were proclaimed in all the congregations, on the first Thursday of each month, and the food saved in that way distributed among the poor and thousands of persons who had an abundance of bread put their families on rations, so as to save the same for those who could not otherwise obtain it. And so wise and liberal were the regulations during these periods of scarcity incident upon settling the Territory that no one perished or even suffered materially for the want of food, and all were remarkably healthy.

(To be continued.)

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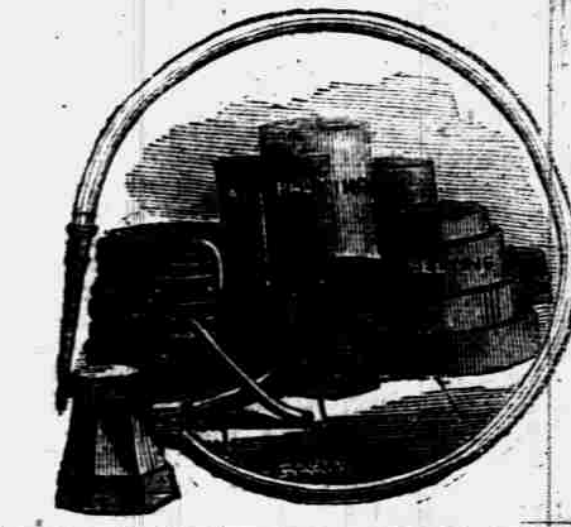
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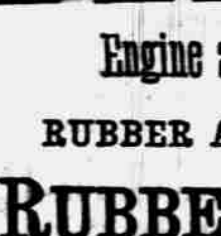
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