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THE DESERET WEEKLY.

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THE BANNOCK STAKE OF ZION.

BY ANDREW JENSON.

MENAN WARD.

William Nephi Stephens, Bishop; Oscar William Crowley Owens, First Counselor; Spencer Vasmus Raymond, Second Counselor.

Menan Ward, the oldest "Mormon" settlement in the Bannock Stake of Zion, outside of the Saints residing on the west end of Poole's Island, then named in honor of John R. Poole, the first settler. It is also called Long Island. The ward extends east to the Labelle Ward or to the township line between Ranges 38 and 39 east. It is nine miles long with an average width of three miles. The whole island, which is one of the choicest spots in the upper Snake River Valley, is about twenty-five miles long and ranges from one to three miles in width, the west end being the widest. It is separated from the main land by the largest channel of Snake River, on the north, and the so-called "Dry Bed," on the south. This latter stream was undoubtedly dry once, but is now a large river, with a swift and dangerous current, so that the only means of crossing it is by ferry most of the time. The Big Butte Ferry is the means of communication between Poole's Island and the main land on the north.

Fine groves of timber and numerous clumps of cottonwood trees beautify the island, which is also noted for its extensive meadows and very rich and productive soil.

Only a small portion of the people live on the townsite, the others residing on their farms.

The Menan townsite comprises 320 acres of land and is part of section 33 in township 5 north, range 38 east, Boise Meridian. It is 17 miles, by way of ferry, north of Eagle Rock and about sixteen miles southwest of Rexburg. In a straight line it is only two miles north of Louisville. (See map on Page 136).

About two miles east of the Menan townsite stands a peculiar oblong hill known as Cedar Butte, also called Little Buttes to distinguish it from the Big Buttes, or Craters, on the main land. The "Little Buttes" have a height of about one hundred feet, and is about half a mile long from north to south; it is covered with small cedars. A deep depression in the middle gives it the appearance of two buttes. The ascent from the west is quite steep, while the slope is more gradual from the opposite side.

HISTORY.—The beautiful and fertile island now known as Poole's Island lay "for many years as if lost to the busy world, except when visited by some trapper in search of such wealth as he might occasionally find in beaver and wild animals, which were found in great numbers along the banks of the Snake River, or perhaps some nomadic stock owner who had located here for the convenience of water and pasture which nature seemed to have lavished in bestowing upon this lovely land. It lay here as if hidden from the outside world by the protecting hand of Providence for the future home of Latter-day Saints, those of God's children who may choose to locate here and sanctify the land by keeping the statutes and judgments of the Almighty, until February, 1879, when Elder John R. Poole testing attracted here by reports of wild game in great abundance visited the island, after which he proceeded to Ogden, Utah, where he resided, and reported what he had seen and knew of the country to Franklin D. Richards, who gave him a letter of instruction, authorizing him to induce settlers to come here and he was to preside over them.

During that year (1879) that part of the country was surveyed by the government.

In March, 1879, Joseph C. Fisher moved his family to the island and located near the "Little Buttes." This was the first Latter-day Saint family on the island. Previous to this a few non-Mormon stockmen had located temporary ranches there.

In April, 1879, John R. Poole again visited the island and set teams to plowing at a point northeast of the "Little Buttes," which was the first plowing ever done on the island. In a letter which he, under date of April 29, 1879, sent to Apostle Franklin D. Richards, he writes:

"I left Ogden April 1, 1879, and arrived in Blackfoot the same day. After visiting my railroad camp I, together with others, proceeded to the vicinity of the forks of Snake River and thence to the mouth of the South Fork Canyon, where we encamped for the Sabbath. On Monday, April 7, we procured a boat and crossed the South Fork. On that and the following day, in company with Frederick Garner and others, I prospected the country between the two forks of Snake River, so far as we could within the limited time we had at our disposal and the means of conveyance in our possession for the boat with which we had to cross the river was too small to take our animals over. In the evening of the 8th we re-crossed the river to camp, and in the evening of the 9th we arrived at the "Little Buttes," or mounts, standing on the south side of the river, directly south of and within three miles of the forks of Snake River. On the 10th, assisted by Brother Garner and others, I selected a section of land lying west of and adjacent to the buttes for a townsite. Afterwards we selected and located lands for farms, all of which was done speedily and to the entire satisfaction of all present. Our little company consisted of fifteen souls, among whom were three brothers by the name of Wilson, of West Weber, Utah, Brother Fred. Garner and brother, James Clement, my son and others. We were all pleased with the appearance of the country and the facilities it presented for agricultural pursuits, as well as for stock raising. The climate seems more congenial than was at first anticipated.

"I continued my labors of exploring until the morning of the 17th, when I returned to my grazing camp. I am informed by a Brother Heath, who is living in Willow Creek, that he and others raised corn on that stream last year, and in fact they showed us some which was well matured. There is a fine tract of country along Willow Creek, and also in the forks of Snake River, along the Teton and other streams, as well as on the north side of Henry's Fork. There are facilities in this country for hundreds of comfortable homes.

"During the remainder of 1879 several other families came to the island and located upon various pieces of land as choice left them to select, and began building and improving the same. Among those settlers was Alexander N. Stephens.

"In July, 1879, Joseph C. Fisher moved into his house which had been erected near the "Little Buttes." This was the first log house finished on the island by Latter-day Saints.

"Some time during the fall of 1879, John R. Poole called all the people who had located on the island together in the house of A. Wright, a non-"Mormon," and held a meeting with them, which was the first Latter-day Saint meeting ever held in that part of the country. In December Elder Poole moved his family to the island.

"In 1880 the little settlement was strengthened by the arrival of other families seeking for homes.

"July 16, 1880, the first child (Alexander V., a son of Alexander N. Stephens) was born on the island.

"In August, 1881, Susannah R. Poole taught a term of school, which was the first school taught on the island.

"The crops were enough which the people of Menan got their irrigation water, and which tapped the main branch of Snake River, was completed in 1880-81 by the settlers, who have since incorporated under the name of the Long Island Canal Company. The canal is about eight miles long.

"In November, 1881, Mariner W. Merrill, of the Cache Stake Presidency, and William D. Hendricks visited the island and held two meetings with the Saints. On that occasion John R. Poole was set apart to preside over the branch then organized, and named it the Cedar Buttes Branch of the Cache Stake of Zion. This name was suggested by President Preston because of its close proximity to the above mentioned buttes. On the same occasion Susannah R. Poole was sustained as clerk of the branch, and Joseph C. Fisher and David H. Carr were sustained as home missionaries. About this time, also, Alexander N. Stephens and Spencer V. Raymond were appointed to act as Teachers. They were the first acting Teachers on the island. The Cedar Buttes Branch at the time of its organization included the whole township south and east of Snake River as far south as Pocatello.

"That year (1881) the first Sunday school was organized by John R. Poole, who was superintendent. It was continued until the snowdrifts regaled with all boats and school features, we turned early in 1882. The Menan Sunday school was reorganized with Albert L. Ellsworth as superintendent. Also a Y. M. M. I. A. was organized in 1881.

"In 1882 a few more families arrived, who, with those already upon the island, put in some grain and a few potatoes. In the fall it was ascertained that wheat, oats and barley, as well as all the hardier vegetables, could be grown there in abundance.

"In February, 1883, the Cedar Buttes townsite was surveyed by Andrew S. Anderson. It contained a mile square, but this since been reduced to half that quantity on account of trouble in getting title to the land. This is the same site that was located by John R. Poole in 1879. In May, 1883, the sale of city lots commenced. The townsite was originally entered under the desert act, under the advice of government officials, but it was afterwards found out, owing to a technical error, after proving up on it, and after a final receipt had been obtained. The money expended has never been returned. Afterwards the townsite was entered by the probate judge under the townsite act, but only half of it was secured, because not enough settlers located on it within the time specified by law. The whole trouble in this connection was caused by misrepresentations on the part of the Idaho officials, who, with a view to blessing the people for money, took advantage of these technicalities of the law. As it now stands, the people have bought their lots twice.

"October 25th, 1885, William B. Preston, President of the Cache Stake, visited the place and authorized Robert L. Rigby to build a tithing office on the townsite and to collect tithing from the people. The foundation for such a building was laid November 25th and completed December 25th following.

"In December, 1885, the first private dwelling was built on the townsite. William N. Stephens built the second house. In the summer of 1884 a few more houses were built on the townsite and a proportionate number of families were added to the slowly increasing population.

"In April, 1884, Robert L. Bybee set out 53 apple trees and 10 plum trees on his city lot south of the tithing office, which were the first trees planted on the townsite; he also fenced the first lot on the townsite.

"At a quarterly conference held at Rexburg, August 17, 1884, Robert L. Bybee was ordained a High Priest, under the hands of George Q. Cannon, Francis M. Lyman and George Teasdale, and set apart to act as Bishop of the Cedar Buttes Ward.

"September 28, 1884, the following brethren were set apart to act as ward Teachers: Alexander N. Stephens, Spencer V. Raymond, Homer A. Pease, Charles W. Shippen, Lorenzo F. Shurtliff, Francis Todd, J. T. Caldwell, W. F. Walker, Joseph H. Rigby, Joseph C. Fisher.

"October 26, 1884, President Thomas E. Ricks visited the island, on which occasion George Eames and John G. Morgan were ordained High Priests and set apart to act as first and second Counselors to Bishop Robert L. Bybee.

"In 1885, the people petitioned the postoffice department for a postoffice, which was granted, but the name Cedar Buttes was objected to by the department because of its length. Hence a mass meeting of the people of the island was held in March, 1885, at which the name Menan was adopted, it being an Indian name for island.

"May 2, 1885, Hiram Poole, a shoemaker son of John R. Poole, was accidentally drowned in the old river bed; his body was never found.

"In that year (1885) Bishop Bybee was appointed acting President of the Stake and William Nephi Stephens was appointed to take temporary charge of the ward. He acted in that capacity until August 21, 1887, when he was ordained a High Priest and set apart to act as Bishop of the Ward by Apostle Lorenzo Snow. This was done at a quarterly conference held at Rexburg. On the same occasion Oscar W. Owens and Spencer V. Raymond were ordained High Priests and set apart to act as his first and second counselors. This Bishopric still stands intact.

"The first meeting and school house at Menan was erected in 1883. It was the second meeting house built in the Bannock Stake, the one in Parker (Egin) succeeding it. This house was burned in the fall of 1885. Previous to its erection meetings were held in a small log house, originally built for a private residence. A few years ago the present meeting house, a log building, 22x40 feet, was erected.

PARKER WARD.

Wyman Myrand Parker, Bishop; Francis Rawson, First Counselor; Arnold Daniel Miller, Second Counselor.

Parker Ward, the most northerly ward in the Stake, embraces all the country lying north of Henry's Fork of Snake River, east of the Brighton ward. The line between the two wards is just three miles west of the centre of the Cather townsite. About half the population are Gentiles.

Parker townsite, which embraces all of section 9 in township 7 north, of range 39 east, Boise Meridian, is a direct line, is only eight miles north of Rexburg, but the way the road runs, by way of the bridge at St. Anthony, the distance is about twenty miles. It is also 35 miles northeast of Market Lake, the nearest railway point. Owing to imperfect title, and for other causes, there is a small percentage of the people live on the townsite; the majority reside on their respective quarter sections.

Parker vies with Teton in point of beautiful location, and the surrounding level country here in the spring of the year is literally covered with a green carpet of a yellowish hue, which makes the case in the Wilford and Teton wards. The hardy wheat bearing these hues is the national vegetable in this part of the valley, while the country south of the main fork of Snake River is generally covered with a thrifty growth of sage brush.

The land in the neighborhood is very productive and particularly adapted for the raising of vegetables of all kinds. Water will run west and south.

HISTORY.—That part of the country now included in Parker Ward was first visited by Stephen Winegar and ten others, from Bannock, Rich County, Utah, in July, 1884. They came with a view to locating farms and ranches on the south side of Henry's Fork. After a few days they returned. In the fall Mr. Winegar came back with four of his sons and commenced to put up hay and make improvements.

The first building was erected by Stephen Winegar and sons, September 1, 1884, on the Dodge land near the river, at a point three miles northeast of the present townsite, on the northeast quarter of section 13 of township 7 north, range 39 east. Two other houses were erected about the same time. Three families spent the winter of 1884-85 at the little settlement. During the winter the river froze over and the water rose so high that it flooded the flat where two of the houses were built. Consequently, the little colony, consisting of about twenty souls, were obliged to spend part of the winter in the only house left on dry ground, which was the one first built by the Stakes had nearly all their stock, the winter being quite severe.

In June other settlers arrived, and in 1885 Wyman M. Parker and others moved in with their families from Morgan County, Utah, and located on the quarter sections adjoining those taken up by the first settlers.

The new settlement was first known as Garden Grove, which name it retained until about 1887, when the postoffice was made, when the postoffice department at Washington made objections to that name. A meeting of citizens was then quickly called, Spring of 1888 and the name of Egin adopted. Egin is an Indian name signifying cold, and was suggested by the fact that it was the coldest day of the season on which the meeting was held. The Egin postoffice was opened July 1, 1888, with A. F. Parker as postmaster.

November 28, 1881, at a meeting held at the house of Stephen Winegar, attended by M. W. Merrill, of the Cache Stake Presidency, William D. Hendricks, of Logan, and John R. Poole (set apart a few days before as President of the island), the little colony on Henry's Fork was organized into a branch of the Church, with Wyman M. Parker as presiding Priest. This branch organization was to include all the Saints residing at Egin, Camas and Market Lake, and in fact all the Saints living on the north and east side of Snake River. William Rawson and John Powell were appointed Teachers, Ezekiel Greenwood leader of the choir, and Thomas G. Parker clerk of the branch.

January 8, 1882, the Sunday School was organized, with William Rawson as superintendent and twelve members.

In June, 1883, Bishop L. W. Hardy, President William B. Preston and Bishop Thos. E. Ricks visited Parker, on which occasion they selected the Parker townsite and caused it such in honor of Wyman M. Parker, who was then acting as presiding Priest there. About this time water was first brought upon the Egin Bench. On that occasion the Bishop wrote home to a wife for family use, and had already reached a depth of 84 feet without any prospect of water, but at which point the visiting brethren were joining the Bishop about his city well, Bishop Hardy stepped up, tapped Brother Parker on the shoulder and declared that it was about time he should have plenty of water in his well. This prediction was fulfilled two days later when without striking another lick, the well was found filling up with a clear, pure stream, and there was always plenty of water in it afterwards.

January 1, 1884, Thomas G. Parker, a son of Bishop William M. Parker, was accidentally shot and killed by his brother-in-law, Samuel Smith, a young lad ten years old. He was buried on the 6th. This first death in the new settlement cast a gloom over the whole population.

In October, 1885, the first Y. M. M. I. A. was organized by the Stake Presidency with sixteen members, and Francis Rawson as president. November 15, 1885, a Y. L. M. I. A. was organized by Stake R. Poole and others, with seventeen members.

May 17, 1891, the first Relief Society was organized with Elizabeth Jenkins as president, and sixteen members.

On the 13, 14 and 15, 1886, the Parker townsite was surveyed by Andrew S. Anderson.

June 11, 1884, at a meeting held at Egin attended by Apostles Wilford Woodruff and Heber J. Grant, President Thomas E. Ricks and others, the Parker Branch was organized into a ward, with Wyman M. Parker as Bishop.

August 14, 1884, the ward was visited by Presidents John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, and Apostles Francis M. Lyman and George Teasdale.

August 17, 1884, at a conference held at Rexburg, Francis Rawson was ordained a High Priest and set apart as First Counselor to Bishop Parker, and November 28, 1884, Arnold D. Miller was ordained a High Priest and set apart as Second Counselor to Bishop Parker. No change since.

In the following October (1884) there were one hundred and eighty-two members in the ward, which was divided into four districts.

The Egin Canal, through which the people get their water for irrigating purposes, was commenced in the fall of 1879, and completed in June, 1885. It has since been enlarged and lengthened, until it is now twenty miles long, and supplies both Parker and Brighton with water; it cost $26,000. This canal taps the river just above the bridge at St. Anthony, and will carry 20,000 inches of water.

The first meeting house, which was also the first in the Stake, was built in the winter of 1882-83, and the first meeting was held in it January 7, 1883. It was burned through the work of an incendiary in February, 1886, after Anthony was given to the temporarily taken to build the present meeting house on the townsite. This was erected in about two weeks.

Early in the year 1888 an attempt was made to build an anti-Mormon town at a point three miles northeast of Parker. The high-toned name of St. Anthony was given to the prospective city and the sale of town lots commenced, but the scheme proved a failure, and only one store and a dwelling house now marks the site. The place, however, is of importance as the point where a substantial wagon bridge spans the river.

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