

quent sorties and after delivering their fire would return to cover. Again, they would thrust their gun barrels through the snow which lay deep upon the banks above them, and would momentarily raise their heads high enough to take aim and discharge their broadsides at their besiegers. They fought so stubbornly that all efforts to dislodge them for a time proved futile. In the battle Joseph Higbee was killed and several others of the attacking force wounded. The men who participated in this daring exploit were General R. T. Burton, Lot Smith, James Ferguson, John R. Murdock, Ephraim K. Hanks, A. J. Pendleton, Orson K. Whitney, Barney Ward, Henry Johnson and Isham Flynn. The stout efforts of the whites to rout the red men were of the most skillful and heroic character.

"In 1853," continued Mr. Murdock, "I became a laborer in Parley's Indian mission, as it was then called, in southern Utah. My work was among the Piegdes and I partially learned their language. Success among them, though, was of the indifferent kind. They were all right as long as we could feed and clothe them. When we couldn't they were all wrong.

"In 1857 I made two round trips from Salt Lake to Independence, Missouri. In both cases I carried a large amount of mail and important papers to and from President Young. The last trip of this year has been considered a marvel of early time traveling and is talked of to this day. I left here on July 1st and reached Independence, Missouri, in fifteen traveling days. The distance is 1,200 miles and was covered with three changes of animals. It was certainly a phenomenal undertaking for those days and it required wisdom and judgment to do it. It must be remembered that we had neither hay nor grain for our horses those times. It was grass feed only from one end of the journey to the other. We had six men in the party and our method of traveling was this way: We would start out each morning at the first sign of daybreak and make about twenty miles, when we would stop for breakfast and turn the animals out to grass. Our rest would be for a couple of hours. Then we would hitchup again and drive twenty miles for dinner and have about two hours more in which to graze our animals and rest ourselves. Then would come a twenty-mile drive for supper and another rest of a couple of hours when we would make another twenty mile drive into the darkness of the night. The driving was very hard of course, but under the circumstances we took the best possible care of our horses and did remarkably well.

"But in 1858 I made a better short record than the one I have just mentioned of 1,200 miles by vehicle in fifteen days. I will tell you of it later. I left here with Colonel Kane and Captain Egan for Omaha. We traveled by wagon and made fifty miles a day with the same animals and reached the banks of the Missouri in just twenty-one days. On the return trip was when I made the hard ride just referred to. I was carrying a very important package for President

Young and it was imperative that I should get it to him as speedily as possible and I did my best. I came from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake, 115 miles over a rough country to exactly twenty-four hours riding the same horse the entire distance. He was a blooded animal—a beautiful sorrel, I called Palster that I had bought the year before. He stood the trip splendidly though he was getting very tired when I rode into town and delivered my message to the President. But he came through it all right and lived to do service long after that.

"I did not cross the plains again until 1861, in which year I took a Union train of fifty wagons to Florence to bring back emigrants and supplies. Other teams accompanied the train: They were teams of merchants and private parties who fell in line to secure the protection our numbers afforded. The next three successive years I made similar trips. Late in the season of 1868 I went to Laramie and piloted another emigrant train to Salt Lake. This was the last train of the season and the last trip I made."

Asked to narrate some particular incident or adventure of his experience over the Plains as a pilot of Pioneer expeditions, Mr. Murdock said: "During one of our quick trips to Independence in 1857 we met a war party of forty Cheyenne Indians on Plum creek, a tributary of the Platte. Our escape from annihilation I have always regarded as Providential. We observed the Indians some distance before we came directly upon them, but supposed at first that they were a troop of United States cavalry. We were traveling very fast and as we drew up to them we observed that they were heavily armed and had on their war paint and feathers. They were very solicitous that we should stop, but I commanded the boys to keep going at all hazards, and they did so, while I knowing the fondness of the Indian for tobacco took up an armful of the weed and gave it to the chief to distribute among his braves. We were outnumbered greatly, our party comprising but six men, while theirs was made up of more than forty savage warriors. In addition to myself our party consisted of Benjamin Hampton, John Mackey, Am J Jackson, Horace Clark and John Kerr. Five of us belonged to the Y. X. company (Brigham Young's express company), Mr. Kerr represented Kincaid & Bell, the well known Salt Lake merchants of that day and was traveling with us. Mr. Kerr had \$80,000 in gold and silver with him which he was taking to St. Louis for deposit. But for an accident we would have lost all this and we our lives. The accident is what I referred to as having always regarded as being Providential. When within about 300 yards of the Indians, Mr. Kerr accidentally discharged his double barreled shotgun through the cover of one of our wagons. We had three such and all were light spring affairs. The report was loud and sharp and brought the Indians to a stand still in short order. A hole a foot square was blown through the top of the cover. The Indians immediately came to the conclusion that all of our wagons were filled with armed men concealed behind the covers, ready

to open fire upon them and they were accordingly disconcerted and although they held a council, evidently with a view to attacking us, and recovering their lost opportunity we drove rapidly on for 35 miles without stopping, and thus put ourselves safely beyond their reach. It was a very close call, and one I will never forget."

In 1858 Mr. Murdock figured conspicuously as the leader of a relief party for another Salt Lake party that had gone to the assistance of an emigrant train on the Platte. The latter party was caught in the snow on the east side of the Big Mountain. The drifts were uncommonly deep and the weather biting cold. To Mr. Murdock and his party was deputed the tremendous task of breaking a trail over the Big Mountain. They worked very hard believing as they did that it meant life or death to their friends beyond. Finally the trail was broken and the party pulled over through the great cut in the snow. This cut, says Mr. Murdock, was so deep that when a pole was put across the chasm—high covered wagons passed several feet beneath the banks being fourteen feet high on either side. But these are only a few out of many thrilling scenes which go to make up the life of Mr. Murdock.

In 1864 Mr. Murdock went to Beaver county and took charge of the ecclesiastical affairs there as presiding Bishop. Later he was made president of the Stake a position he held until three years ago. He has also been prominently associated with the mercantile and manufacturing interests of southern Utah and was a member of the Constitutional Convention of Utah.

#### IDAHO WEATHER.

The month of April opened with freezing night temperatures, daily thaws and occasional light snow or rain, gradually changing into warmer with less precipitation; by the middle of the month mild and seasonable weather prevailed, these conditions existing until the beginning of the last decade when rain and cooler weather were generally over the State; the latter part of the month gave generally clear and warm days with cool nights, frost occurring in many places. Much of the winter snow was still present in the central and southeastern sections during the first half of the month, but at the end of the period it was confined principally to the mountains and foothills.

The soil during the greater part of the month was too wet for plowing but, however its condition would permit, plowing, seeding and gardening progressed rapidly, and in some cases all crops were in the ground by the 8th. Such crops as had appeared above the ground were in thriving condition; fruit trees were budding and grass and lucern sprouting well. The ranges were generally in excellent condition, and much stock was turned out during the last week.

The mean temperature for the State was 43.9 degrees, 3.1 degrees warmer than April of last year. Mean maximum 57.6; mean minimum 30.2; the highest mean monthly temperature