

### ABOUT THE BOOK OF MOR-MON.

INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF ANOTHER INTERVIEW WITH THE ONLY SURVIVING WITNESS WHO BEHELD THE ANGEL AND HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD TESTIFYING TO THE TRUTH OF THE RECORD.

ANOTHER VISIT TO DAVID WHITMER.

NEW YORK, March 18th, 1884.

Editor Deseret News:

En route to this city I called on David Whitmer, who had invited me to visit him again and examine the manuscript copy of the Book of Mormon, etc. On the 10th inst. I had a pleasant interview, a few items of which may not be without interest to many of your readers. He greeted me with a jappy smile as he remembered my former visit and the lines written commemorating the interview, which he endorsed as a correct expression of his sentiments.

MANUSCRIPT COPY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

Knowing the object of my visit, he brought the manuscript, which was carefully wrapped and tied, and with evident satisfaction and modest pride, unwrapped and spread it before me. Considering the fifty odd years since it was in the hands of Major Gilbert, the printer, it is well preserved. It is written closely on unruled foolscap of a poor quality, of which, there is fully one half ream, and perhaps more. Being written closely from side to side, there is no blank margin. It is singularly free from corrections, and has no erasures, nor interlineations, so far as I could discover. Quite a number of the sheets had been cut in three pieces or "takes," obviously for the use of the printers. They were replaced in position, small pieces of blank paper placed over, and pinned together.

Observing two or three styles of writing, and the certificate from the Clerk of the Court of Wayne County, that it had been copyrighted there in June, 1828, I remarked that it looked very much as though it was the original copy, and it would in fact take considerable more evidence than I had seen to convince me that it was not the original and only written copy. Mr. Whitmer said, "I know, positively, that it is so. Why, look at this," he remarked, "here is some of my poor old mother's yarn, that was used to fasten the sheets together." And sure enough there was the sheep's gray yarn, that fastened a certain number of sheets together in several divisions. As this is a disputed question, I simply submit the foregoing, leaving each person to judge for himself.

#### THE SPECIMEN HIEROGLYPHICS.

I was shown the reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics, that were copied from the plates by the Prophet Joseph, and taken by Martin Harris to Professors Anthon and Mitchell, of New York City, in February, 1828. They are written on unruled paper, about three and a half inches by seven, and fill up seven lines, making about thirty-five inches of writing. They remind me very much of some Egyptian hieroglyphics I have seen in the British Museum, London, and in other collections.

#### COINCIDENTAL EVIDENCE.

The New York Tribune, in an article published a few days ago, commenting on a discovery said to have been made recently by the Rev. Father Damazo Soto, of Concordia, in the State of Vera Cruz, Mexico, of the key to the Aztec writings, says:

"It may be, that the discovery, refers not to the Aztec, but to the Toltec writings. And if this be the case it may lead to interesting developments. The Toltecs who were the precursors of the Aztecs in Mexico, and who flourished in Central America, where they left marvelous relics. Palenque, Copan, Yucatan, were of a higher civilization than the people who succeeded them. And they had a pure system of hieroglyphics, of which, unfortunately, few specimens are known to exist, the most acceptable being in the Dresden Museum.

The fragments of Toltec writing which have been preserved however, are sufficient to justify the conclusion that this people were accustomed to employ for their religious and astrological writings a special hieroglyphic, corresponding in some respects to the Egyptian hieratic script. We are not aware that any of this priestly text has been deciphered fully. Could this hieratic writing be deciphered, the writer remarks, it is probable that new light would be thrown upon the religion and science of that ancient and interesting people, and such information would be particularly welcome in this era of analytic inquiry."

The writer of the Tribune article might learn from this correspondence that the hieroglyphics—of the ancient and interesting people who built the cities of Central America—that are the most acceptable, are not those in Dresden, but those that were shown by your correspondent the other day in Richmond, Ray County, Missouri. He might learn moreover that over 600 pages have been fully translated from such hieroglyphics he has mentioned, which constituted the record called the Book of Mormon, which throws a flood of light upon the religion, science and history of the ancient, interesting and enlightened people who have dwelt upon this continent during the ages of antiquity. It may be interesting to the

critical student to compare the statement of the Tribune writer which I have quoted verbatim from said journal, which refers to their "pure system of hieroglyphics," their "special hieroglyphics, corresponding in some respects, to the Egyptian hieroglyphic script," with the following quotation from the Book of Mormon: "And now behold we have written this record according to our knowledge in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech." Page 570, last edition.

When we take into consideration the fact that this was written in the year 1829, and published in 1830, which was many years before the ruined cities of Palenque, Copan and Yucatan were discovered, or anything was known concerning the hieroglyphics that were subsequently discovered by Stevens and Catherwood and other travelers, it is simply marvelous that an unlettered boy should be the first to publish these things to the world, and can be accounted for on no other principle than that he and his friends have claimed from the first, namely, that they were translated by the gift and power of God.

#### HOW MR. WHITMER FIRST HEARD OF IT.

Mr. Whitmer said the first he heard concerning the Prophet Joseph and the "Golden Bible" as it was then called, was from Oliver Cowdery, who was then quite a young man, about his own age, who went to the neighborhood where Joseph had lived, and where his parents and family still lived and taught school. "Oliver promised if he could find out anything definite and reliable he would let me know. Soon after this Oliver told me that certain young men about Joseph's age, who had been raised with him in the neighborhood, were very angry against Joseph and complained against him bitterly, saying he had not kept his word with them, for he had promised to give them some of the golden plates when he obtained them, whereas he had got them and had not given them any as he had promised. When Oliver suggested to them that perhaps Joseph had not got them, they replied angrily: We know he has, for we have seen the place on the hill where he got them."

Mr. Whitmer, continuing his narrative, said: "Soon after this, Oliver concluded to go and see Joseph and learn all he could about the matter, and promised to write and tell me the result of his inquiries. So about the beginning of April, 1829, he went to Harmony, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, where Joseph had gone to get away from his enemies, and to escape those who were trying to get the plates from him, for he was told by the personage who gave him charge of said plates, that if he should let them go carelessly, or through negligence, he should be cut off. Soon after Oliver's arrival in Harmony, he wrote to me and said that Joseph had envied of the Lord concerning him, and had told him secrets of his life that he knew could not be known to any person but himself, in any other way than by revelation from the Almighty.

"Some little time after this he wrote asking me to take a team and fetch Joseph and himself to my father's house, in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, where they would continue the translation. I consulted with my father who consented that I should take a team as requested and bring them home. I was a little over two and a half days going, and traveled over 40 miles the first day, and met them on the third day at the head of Cayuga Lake. Oliver told me they knew just when I started, where I put up at night and even the name on the sign board of the hotel where I stayed each night, for he had asked Joseph to look in the Seer stone, that he did so, and told him all these particulars of my journey, which Oliver had carefully noted in his book.

"Oliver asked me when I first met them, when I left home, where I stayed on the road, and the names of the persons keeping the hotels. I could not tell the names, but as we returned I pointed out the several houses where I had stopped, when he pulled out his book and found it to be correct even to the names.

#### THE TRANSLATION.

"In regard to the translation," said Mr. Whitmer, "it was a laborious work for the weather was very warm, and the days were long and they worked from morning till night. But they were both young and strong and were soon able to complete the work.

"The way it was done was thus: Joseph would place the seer-stone in a deep hat, and placing his face close to it, would see, not the stone, but what appeared like an oblong piece of parchment, on which the hieroglyphics would appear, and also the translation in the English language, all appearing in bright luminous letters. Joseph would then read it to Oliver, who would write it down as spoken. Sometimes Joseph could not pronounce the words correctly, having had but little education; and if by any means a mistake was made in the copy, the luminous writing would remain until it was corrected. It sometimes took Oliver several trials to get the right letters to spell correctly some of the more difficult words, but when he had written them correctly, the characters and the interpretation would disappear, and be replaced by other characters and their interpretation.

"When the seer-stone was not placed in the hat, no characters or writing

could be seen therein, but when so placed then the hieroglyphics would appear as before described. Some represented but one word, or name, some represented several, and some from one to two lines.

"Emma, Joseph's wife, came to my father's house a short time after Joseph and Oliver came, and she wrote a little of the translation, my brother Christian wrote some, but Oliver wrote the greater portion of it."

#### TRUE TO THEIR TESTIMONY.

Mr. Whitmer felt very indignant while speaking of certain statements published recently to the effect that he and Oliver Cowdery had denied their statement as published in the Book of Mormon. This he denounced as false in every particular. He said: "Oliver never wavered in his testimony, and when he was on his death bed, I was there, with many of his friends, until he passed away. He bore the same testimony on his dying bed that he had always borne through life, and earnestly called upon all to cleave to the truth revealed through the Prophet Joseph, and to serve the Lord. As for myself, I have never denied my testimony that is published in the Book of Mormon, for I know that God has revealed these things for the salvation of the children of men, and to Him belongs all the honor, the power and the glory."

Many other interesting items were given by Mr. Whitmer during our interview, but I have already extended this communication much longer than I intended.

JAMES H. HART.

#### AN ACT,

PROVIDING FOR THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, That any person desiring to adopt the child of another, may do so in the following manner.

Sec. 2. The parents, guardians or other person or persons having lawful control, or custody of any minor child, may make a statement in writing before the Probate Judge of the County where the person desiring to adopt such child resides, that he, she or they voluntarily relinquish all right to the custody of, and power and control over such child (naming such child), and all claim and interest in and to the services and wages of such child, to the end that such child shall be fully adopted by the party desiring to adopt such child, which statement shall be signed and sworn to by the party making the same, before said Probate Judge, in the presence of at least two witnesses; and the person desiring to adopt such child, shall also make a statement in writing to the effect that he or she freely and voluntarily adopt such child, (naming such child), as his or her own, with such limitations and conditions as shall be agreed upon by the parties. Said statement shall also be signed and sworn to by the party making the same, before said Probate Judge, in the presence of at least two witnesses: Provided, in all cases where such child shall be of the age of fourteen years and upward, the written consent of such child shall be necessary to the validity of such proceeding, and provided further, whenever it shall be desirable, the party adopting such child may by stipulations to that effect in such statement, adopt such child and bestow upon him or her equal rights, privileges, and immunities of children born in lawful wedlock, and such statement shall be filed with and recorded by said Probate Judge, in a book kept in his office for that purpose.

Sec. 3. And such Probate Judge shall appoint a time and place for the hearing of said matter, and shall give three weeks notice thereof to all persons who may be interested, (therein,) by publication thereof in a newspaper published in said county, and in case no paper is published in said county, then the notice shall be published in a newspaper printed in the Territory, having general circulation in said county.

Sec. 4. At the time and place of hearing such matter, if said hearing shall not be adjourned, the said Probate Judge shall render a decree therein, in accordance with the conditions and stipulations of said statement, Provided, in case it shall appear to the satisfaction of such Probate Judge, that such proceedings are not for the best interest of the child or children, he may refuse to enter such decree, and the matter shall thereupon be dismissed.

Sec. 5. All decrees entered in such case in conformity with the provisions and requirements hereinbefore named, shall be conclusive upon all the persons interested in such proceedings, and the child or children, thus adopted shall take the surname of the person adopting the same, and all relations of parents and child, agreeably to such stipulations and the decree of the Probate Court, shall attach, and such child or children, if so stated in such decree, shall be subject to exclusive control and custody of such parent or parents and shall possess and enjoy all the rights, privileges, inheritances, heirship and immunities of children born in lawful wedlock.

Sec. 6. A married man, not lawfully separated from his wife, cannot adopt a child without the consent of his wife; nor can a married woman, not thus separated from her husband, without his consent, provided the husband or wife not consenting is capable of giving such consent.

Sec. 7. The parents of an adopted child are, from the time of the adoption, relieved of all parental duties, towards, and all responsibility for the child so adopted, and have no right over it.

Sec. 8. The Probate Judge shall be entitled to charge the same fees for such services as now are provided by law for like services in other cases.

JAMES SHARP,

Speaker of the House.

W. W. CLUFF,

President of the Council.

Approved March 13th, 1884.

ELI H. MURRAY,

Governor of the Territory of Utah.

UTAH TERRITORY,  
Secretary's Office, } ss.

I, Arthur L. Thomas, Secretary of the Territory of Utah, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of an Act entitled "An Act providing for the adoption of children. Approved March 13th, 1884."

Attest my hand and the great seal of the Territory of Utah, this 25th day of March, 1884.

[SEAL.]

ARTHUR L. THOMAS,  
Secretary.

#### AN ACT

COMPILING THE LAWS RELATING TO THE INCORPORATION OF IRRIGATION COMPANIES.

SEC. 1. Be it enacted by the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, That upon the majority of the citizens of any county or part thereof, representing to the County Court that more water is necessary, and that there are streams or parts of streams unclaimed or unused, which, if brought out of their natural channels and thrown upon tracts of land under cultivation, or to be put under cultivation, can be of value to the interests of agriculture, the County Court having jurisdiction may proceed to organize the county, or part thereof, into an irrigation district; and thereafter the land-holders of such district shall be equally entitled to the use of the water in, or be brought into such district, according to their acknowledged rights; provided, such land-holders pay their proportion of the expense incurred in the construction and keeping in repair of the necessary canals, flumes, dams or ditches.

Sec. 2. The citizens of an irrigation district, when so organized for the purposes provided in the preceding section, may, in mass meeting, proceed to the formation of a company, by electing, viva voce, not less than three nor more than thirteen Trustees, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Notice of the time, place and object of said mass meeting shall be given by the Clerk of the County Court, at least ten days previous, by advertising three times in some newspaper having general circulation in the county, and by posting up notices in three public places in the district.

Sec. 3. It shall be the duty of the Trustees so elected to locate the proposed canal or ditch, determine the amount and quality of the land to be benefited thereby, to estimate the cost, including dams, flumes, locks, waste weirs and all the appurtenances belonging thereto, the amount per acre or the percentage on taxable property which will be necessary to construct the same.

Sec. 4. It shall then be the duty of the Trustees to make a report to the County Court of the location and estimate provided for in Section Three of this Act; also to call a meeting of the holders of the lands to be benefited by the proposed canal or ditch, at which a copy of said report shall be presented, and the said landholders shall vote "Yes" or "No" upon the following questions:

1.—Do you mutually agree to pay per acre land tax to construct the proposed canal or ditch?

2.—Do you approve the Action of the mass meeting in the election of officers?

Notice shall be given by the Trustees at least ten days previous to the time appointed for such meeting, by advertising at least three times in some newspaper having general circulation in the county, and by posting up notices in three public places in the district. Said advertisement and notice shall state distinctly the time and place and object of such meeting, and be signed by a majority of the Trustees and the Secretary. The voting at said meeting shall be by ballot, and the chairman and secretary of said meeting shall be the Judge and Clerk of the election. A ballot box shall be provided by the Trustees, and such voter shall present his ballot to the Judge of election, who shall deposit it in the box, and the clerk shall write the name of the voter in a poll list or book which shall also be provided by the Trustees. No person shall be entitled to vote at said meeting or election unless he is a landholder in the District. Immediately after the close of the election, the ballots shall be openly counted by the Judge and Clerk, assisted by two persons chosen by the voters present. A certificate of the results of the election, signed by the persons who counted the votes, shall be forwarded at once to the Clerk of the County Court by the Judge of said election.

Sec. 5. If upon counting the votes it shall appear that two-thirds of the votes polled have been answered in the affirmative, then the tax so agreed upon shall be a law in the said irrigation district; and the tax when collected

shall be paid over to the treasurer of said company on his order. Provided, That not exceeding one-half of the tax so agreed upon shall be collected at one time, the residue to be collected as the work progresses, Provided further, That if the first estimate prove insufficient for the construction of the canal or ditch with its appurtenances, then additional taxes may be assessed in the same manner as hereinbefore provided until the said canal or ditch is completed.

Sec. 6. If less than two-thirds of the votes polled are answered in the affirmative, then all proceedings under this act shall be null and of no effect; Provided, That if there are objections to the officers selected by the mass meeting, the electors may write other names on their tickets; the persons having the most votes to be declared elected, and it shall be the duty of the County Clerk to notify such officers forthwith of their election.

Sec. 7. Within twenty days after receiving such notice the officers so elected shall file bonds in the office of the clerk of the County Court, conditioned for the faithful performance of their several duties; the amount of such bonds to be declared by the County Court having jurisdiction.

Sec. 8. The term of office of the first Trustees, Secretary and Treasurer shall be till the next general election; and thereafter for two years, and until their successors are duly elected and file bonds.

Sec. 9. All subsequent elections for determining the rate of tax, shall be held annually on the first Monday in December, and for the election of company officers, biennially, on the same day, at such time and place within the district as shall be designated by the Trustees, at which time the number of Trustees may be changed by a two-thirds vote to not less than three nor more than thirteen. Notice of said election shall be given and the election conducted and certificates thereof returned, as provided in section 4 of this act. The rate of tax determined at said election by a majority vote shall be a law in said irrigation district, and shall constitute a permanent lien on the interest of the taxpayer in said canal or ditch and his right to the use of the water therein flowing, from the day of assessment; Provided, that no tax created or payable by this act shall be or create a lien upon the land.

Sec. 10. The Trustees at their first meeting shall elect one of their number president, and it shall be their duty and they shall have power to fill any vacancy which may occur in the board by death, change of residence, or otherwise; and the persons chosen for this purpose, shall hold office until the next annual election. The Trustees shall also have power to meet at such times and places as they may deem expedient to make by-laws, rules and regulations necessary to carry into effect the objects of the people; to appoint agents, subordinates and officers, and employ such workmen as may be requisite; to appoint assessors and collectors, or make agreement with the county assessors to assess and collect the tax, and notify collectors when additional instalments of the tax will be needed; to construct and complete said canals or ditches, with all necessary appurtenances thereto; to cause to be kept an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements, and to complete said canals and ditches and settle all accounts of the same. Said Trustees shall make an annual report of their proceedings under this act to the county court on or before the first day of February, and shall file with the clerk of the county court a map of said irrigation district, showing the location and subdivision of land therein and of the company's canals and ditches.

Sec. 11. The Trustees shall have power to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, to have and to hold all such real estate and personal property as may be necessary to construct the contemplated ditch or canal, including all appurtenances belonging thereto.

Sec. 12. If any part of the lands to be benefited by the proposed ditch or canal are not legally claimed, then such lands may be appraised by the Trustees and shall be held and the possession of them sold by the Trustees, as opportunity may offer, and the estimated amount of funds necessary to complete such canal or ditch shall be decreased by the estimated value of such lands, previous to the levy and assessment of any tax.

Sec. 13. Where the streams to be taken out for irrigation purposes come from counties other than the one in which the district is situated, but where there are no existing claims to the water and where no individual or settlement will be injured thereby, then the power of said irrigation district is hereby extended to said other county, inasmuch as said extension may be necessary for the construction of dams to turn the waters, and ditches or canals with all necessary appurtenances as may be necessary to convey the same to where it is to be used.

Sec. 14. Where lakes or ponds in natural basins have outlets, or where such can be made by dams across hollows, such lakes or ponds may be used as reservoirs to store water for lands lying on lower levels; and the people of any irrigation district may, under the provisions of this act, construct such artificial or use such natural basins for irrigation purposes; Provided, the waters of such lakes or ponds are in no case to be raised, by dams or otherwise, so as to interfere with or damage settlers upon the margin thereof.

Sec. 15. Upon the construction or partial construction of any canal, ditch or reservoir contemplated in this act,