EARLY CHURCH SCENES.

Jackson and Ray Counties Visited and Described.

David Whitmer's Grave and Tombstone—Where the Other Witnesses are Buried—James Campbell's Annual Fair.

Correspondence of the DESERET NEWS.

LEXINGTON, JACKSON, Ray County, Mo., Sept. 4, 1893.—Before leaving Independence, Jackson county, Mo., this morning, I visited the city cemetery lying southeast of the city center in the outskirts of the town. It is one of the finest graveyards that I have seen in Missouri. It covers fifty-five acres, is kept in fine repair, and contains some of the most handsome and costly monuments met with outside of Greenwood cemetery at Brooklyn, N. Y. Through the courtesy of Mr. H. M. Monahan, the city sexton, I was shown a number of graves containing the earthly remains of some of those who were connected with the persecution in 1833. On one occasion I was the following: "General Samuel D. Lucas, born July 19, 1799; died February 13, 1866." It will be remembered that General Lucas was the man who took Joseph the Prophet and other leading men of the Church prisoners in Far West, Caldwell county, in 1838, and who would have murdered the Prophet and others on that occasion had it not been for Alexander W. Doniphan's interference. Also Samuel Weston, who acted as judge of the peace during the time of the difficulties in 1833, and who died in 1866, aged 72 years, in Independence county. His son, Robert Weston, now a resident of Independence, is one of the oldest settlers living there at this time, gave me some interesting information about early days in Jackson county.

From the tower of the court house in Independence, I obtained the most inviting a fine view of the surrounding country. Jackson county certainly is a desirable one. As far as the eye can reach east and south extensive farms occupy the openings between the timbered tracts of the county skirting the rivers and streams; these wind their way through the uplands towards the mighty Missouri. Still the same as we presumptive like it was years ago, large tracts of high lands which were originally covered with timber but were cleared for farming purposes, have of late years been so badly cut up by washouts that it is almost unfit for cultivation; and the great complaint among the farmers is that it don't pay to till the soil like it did in early Mormon days. Consequently land is coming down in price every year, and at the present time is scarcely worth more than $20 or $25 per acre, except in close proximity to the market towns, when it of course commands a higher price. There are, however, some very fine country places around Independence, prominent among which is the fine residence of H. M. Vail, built in 1890-91; it is one of the most beautiful and costly residences in Jackson county, and is situated on the west side of North Liberty street, one mile north of the public square of Independence. The length of the mansion is 109 by 60 feet with a tower 80 feet high. The view from this tower is magnificent.

It has been supposed that the Temple lot is the highest point in Jackson county, but this appears to be a mistake, as there is a point near the Missouri river—a bluff overlooking that stream and the surrounding country—which is 1024 feet above the level of the Gulf of Mexico, while the level of Independence is only 972 feet, or 52 feet lower. The height of the bluff mentioned is 321 feet above low water mark in the Missouri river.

On my journey from Independence to the Missouri river today, I lingered on this high bluff overlooking the river, in order to enjoy the scenery. There, surrounded by extensive orchards of the finest fruit trees the country can afford, the grandest panorama of natural and artificial scenery meets the eye on every hand, the great Missouri meandering at your feet, beneath the bluff can be seen the winding through the green hills for twenty miles away, its banks fringed with a beautiful growth of walnut, oak, elm and hickory. Passenger steamers and freight boats are occasionally passing up and down the river, while the rush and tumult of the passing train on seven different railroads reverberates through the valley, and the white wreaths of smoke show the course of the iron horse. The spires and houses of half a dozen cities and towns on both sides of the river greet the eye of the beholder, among which are Independence, Kansas City, Wyandotte and Liberty, while near at hand the precipitous and rocky bluffs, the macadam road to Independence landing, the highly cultivated farms and gardens, the shanties, the clumps of timber and the thousands of fruit trees, make this one of the most attractive spots in the state of Missouri. Apples, peaches, pears, cherries, plums, quinces, grapes and a great variety of small fruit are grown in great profusion on this bluff.

Descending the bluff we (my companion was my friend C. A. Hall, of Independence, who took me to the railway station with his team) soon reached the point on the Missouri river known as old Wayne City, 5 miles from Independence, or 12 miles from Kansas City. This is where the old Dunker Ferry used to be on the main road of travel from Liberty to Independence. It was here that most of the Saints who were driven out of Jackson county by a slaughtering mob in 1833 crossed the Missouri river into Clay county. It was also at this point that James Campbell and others lost their lives and where Samuel C. Owens and his companions had such a narrow escape from drowning while attempting to cross the river for the purpose of raising a mob with which to annihilate the members of Zion's Camp who under the leadership of the Prophet Joseph were nearing the borders of Clay county at the time. This circumstance happened in the 18th of June, 1834. When the members had reached the middle of the river, the boat sank and seven out of about twelve of fifteen men were drowned, among them one Hodgkins Jacob, disposed, who had declared with a terrible oath that eagles and turkey buzzards should eat the flesh from his bones if he did not fix Joe Smith and his army in two days, so that their stay would not hold obtained. It seemed that Providence took him on his word, but not Joe Smith and his army; but the dead body was taken by the birds of prey which he himself had mentioned; and when a Mr. Purtle several days afterwards found his remains on a little island—which island now bears the name of Mills Ferry, only the bones were left.

At the point where Dunker's Ferry once was operated and where Wayne City once stood, only two houses remain; the ferry has long ago been discontinued, but one of the old ferry boats lies upon the bank of the stream, a wreck, entirely decayed. The Independence waterworks is situated about half a mile below the ferry site. The Missouri at this point is confined to nearly half its ordinary width, and the channel is consequently deep. At present, however, the water in the river is very low, so much so that one of the Blue Lake accommodates, who had never seen the river before, but had heard of it since his childhood day, remarked: "Is it possible that this is the mighty Missouri of which I have heard so much? Why, it is not much bigger than our Jordan!"

Traveling on a rail along the bank of the Missouri, I had a glimpse of the island on which the session of Mr. Campbell, one of the martyrs referred to, was found. This island is now a farm owned by Geo. P. Hockensmith, one of the leading farmers from Independence, who pointed it out to me.

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway crosses the Missouri river on an elegant bridge near the town of Sibley, or Sibley's ferry, between the site of Fort Osage, founded in 1808, and was the first settlement made by whites in Jackson county; it is 27 miles east of Kansas City.

ANDREW JENSON.

RICHMOND, Ray county, Mo., Sept. 5, 1893.—I arrived here from Kansas City this morning and have been busy most of the day reading and culling from old documents pertaining to the early history of the Church, in the possession of David J. Whitmer; who, in connection with his nephew, Geo. C. L. Schwabeb, received me kindly and have rendered me efficient aid in my historical researches at this place.

Richmond has grown considerably since I was here hence, nearly five years ago, and many improvements are going on the present season, including the macadamizing of some of the principal streets, putting sidewalks, etc. Richmond is the county seat of Ray county and was named by the county court Monday, September 24, 1827. It is situated on two railroads, 41 miles northeast of Kansas City, 237 miles southwest of St. Louis and 67 miles southeast of St. Joseph. The main or central portion of Richmond stands on the crown of a graceful swell, and the suburban portions are located on the slopes of a succession of beautiful wooded hills that nearly surround the central town. The slopes abound in the most attractive building sites that command fine views of rural scenery in