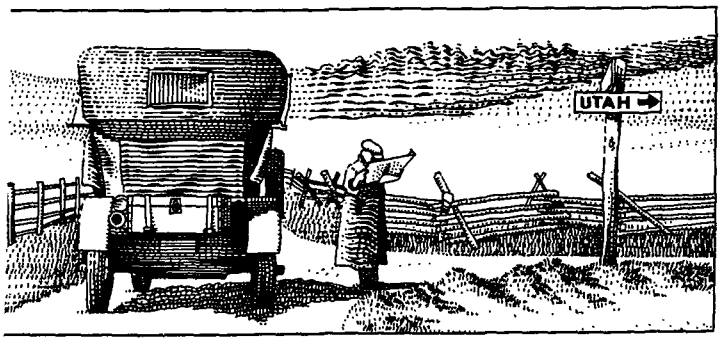
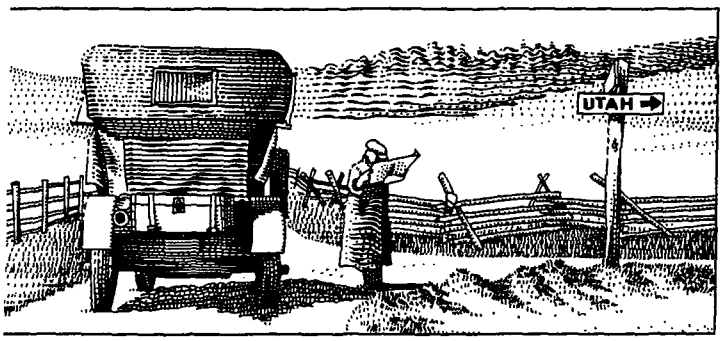


THE HISTORY BLAZER

NEWS OF UTAH'S PAST FROM THE

Utah State Historical Society
300 Rio Grande • Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 533-3500 • FAX (801) 533-3503

December 1996 Blazer Contents



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Ogden Defeats Salt Lake City in a War of the Wheels

IT HAD TO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST RIVALRIES of all time in Utah—the intense competition between Ogden and Salt Lake City during the early years of statehood. The national "*Examiner-Journal* Yellow Fellow Relay Race" of 1896 showed just how lively the rivalry could become. Promoters for the Hearst newspapers thought a transcontinental bicycle relay race from San Francisco to New York would capitalize on the bicycle craze and bring recognition to the newspapers as bikers carried a news item across the nation much like the riders of Pony Express days. Little did they dream of serious shenanigans as Ogden and Salt Lake City tried to outwit each other. The route of the race fanned the flames of intercity rivalry into a blaze with the sparks really flying. And the highjinks of spirited young men on wheels briefly put Utah in the national spotlight.

The comic drama began in the summer of 1896 when William D. ("Big Bill") Rishel, renowned bicycle enthusiast and racer, was chosen by Hearst to manage the western segment of the relay. Rishel, a Salt Lake resident, wanted to promote his community. Huge crowds and important officials would all be involved if the route passed through Utah's capital but Ogden wanted the limelight too. Rishel's major task was to find the shortest, fastest route through Nevada, Utah, and into Wyoming. Passing through both cities would slow the race down, something Rishel wanted to avoid. After thorough scouting, he chose a route that would take the cyclists east across the Salt Lake Desert and around the southern end of the Great Salt Lake, missing Ogden entirely.

Outrage filled the sports pages of the *Ogden Standard* as bicyclists and fans in Ogden protested. The shortest, swiftest way was obviously along the transcontinental railroad tracks around the north end of the lake, through Ogden, up Weber Canyon, and out of Utah via Echo Canyon. If one city had to be by-passed, Ogdenites felt it should be Salt Lake City. Rishel ignored the protests and continued plans for the Salt Lake City route. He lined up dignitaries to greet the cyclists during a change of riders and sign the certificate. It would be a grand event in Utah's capital city.

But nature was bound to have its say in this race and rivalry as well. As the riders and packet were speeding across Nevada rain hit the Salt Desert, turning the mud flats into an impassable mire. Taking bicycles across the ancient lake bed in good weather was risky at best, as Rishel had discovered earlier. Rain made the route impossible. At the last minute Rishel was forced into changing the plan. Riders, spectators, and cities were informed by telegraph that the race would take the northern route around the Great Salt Lake after all. The cyclists would pass through Ogden, continue down to Salt Lake City, and then head east. Ogden wheelmen were enlisted to perform the leg around the lake and through Ogden.

Now the fun began as the rivalry and the determination of the Ogden Wheelmen reached gigantic proportions. Before the route change, Ogden cyclists had been prepared to steal the packet

(more)

and proceed with their own race on the northern route. They lay in wait at Terrace to pull off a hijacking. Now they suspected that Salt Lake riders would try to pull a fast one. Fearing that the Salt Lake boys would be waiting near Lucin or Terrace to prevent the packet from reaching the now sanctioned Ogden, Sam Herrick was waiting, six-shooter at his waist, to make sure the cycles and packet remained on the Ogden course. Indeed, the Salt Lakers did have a plan to keep the packet out of the hands of the Ogdenites by faking a broken bike, detouring around Terrace, and meeting the scheduled riders in Promontory who would ensure that the packet went via Salt Lake City. But one Salt Lake cyclist decided to play by the rules and follow Rishel's revised plan. Despite this rider's sense of fair play, the packet and rider were delayed on the segment east of the Nevada border with an actual bike breakdown. Assuming the delay was caused by an abduction, Sam Herrick went looking for a nonexistent packet-napper. Rumors flew. As it turned out, a courier did come through Terrace, though a bit late. There was no violence, and the new riders sped eastward. The properly scheduled rider received the packet in Kelton, and the relay continued toward Ogden per Rishel's recent orders. The Ogden riders were supposed to carry the packet to mid-Ogden where other riders would take it to Salt Lake City and the Capitol where the governor and a crowd had expectantly gathered. But rivalry would overpower good sportsmanship.

As Rishel—who had ridden parts of the relay himself and then sped ahead by train—waited anxiously in Ogden for the cyclists and packet to appear, Ogden wheelmen had indeed hijacked the packet and chosen their own route toward Echo Canyon. On August 29, Rishel impatiently scanned the road at the corner of Washington and Thirteenth Street, searching the horizon in vain for the expected rider. The transfer was hours overdue. The crowd, too, wondered what had happened. Only a few prankish Ogden wheelmen and boosters knew that the Ogden boys were victorious in scooping Salt Lake. Rishel telegraphed along the route without gaining any information as to the courier's whereabouts. At last the truth became known when the manager at the telegraph office, under duress, gave Rishel the facts. Eleven miles north of Ogden a courier had carried his bike and the packet over the foot of the mountain, then sped up Ogden Canyon to Huntsville and over the mountains to Echo Canyon. It was a cunning plan. The deception had its costs, though—the people of Ogden were deprived of seeing the relay pass through their town. One Ogden booster tied a piece of black crepe to the handle-bars of Rishel's bicycle as a token of triumph. Fortunately, Rishel took it in stride, masked his frustration, caught a train to Echo and met the packet there. The courier at that post sped the packet toward Wyoming.

The San Francisco *Examiner* chronicled the theft by "Ogden's Merry Bandits" as a "bold coup" over the "Capitol of Zion" and the *Ogden Standard*, *Salt Lake Tribune*, and *Deseret News* enjoyed a heyday of banter over the event. The nation had a good laugh at Utah's expense. The race was a success: San Francisco to New York in 13 days and 29 minutes. The most eventful day occurred in Utah when Ogden defeated Salt Lake City in the battle of the wheels.

Sources: Virginia Rishel, *Wheels to Adventure: Bill Rishel's Western Route* (Salt Lake City, 1983); H. K. Chambers, "Tale of Two Cities in a Bicycle War," *Literary Digest*, January 27, 1934, and "Utah Governor Flouted by Runaway Bikers," *Literary Digest*, March 24, 1934; *Ogden Standard*, August 18, September 1, 1896; *Deseret News*, August 29, September 2, 1896; Robert A. Smith, *A Social History of the Bicycle* (New York: American Heritage, 1972).

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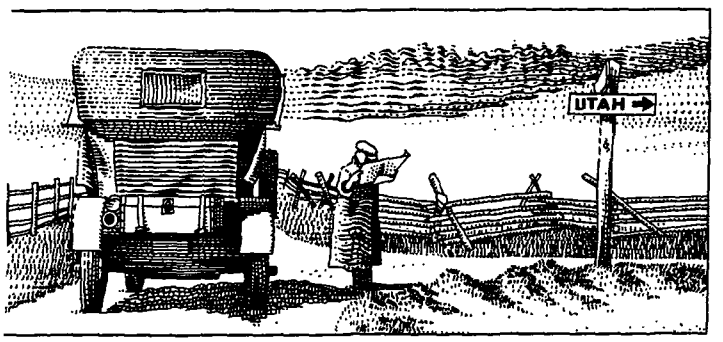

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Josie Bassett—Jensen's Remarkable Woman Rancher

JOSIE BASSETT STANDS OUT AS ONE OF THE MOST colorful characters in Uintah County's colorful past. She was a unique blend: a sweet, generous, loveable white-haired lady who occasionally rustled cattle, poached deer, and brewed bootleg whiskey to survive and help family and friends. For 50 years she lived alone in a cabin without plumbing, telephone, or electricity deep within what is now Dinosaur National Monument. Content among her flowers, gardens, orchards, cattle herds, and assorted domestic animals, she became a fascinating minor character in the pageant of the West.

The Bassetts, an unconventional family, came to Brown's Park in the 1870s. From her mother's example and from growing up on a cattle ranch, Josie learned the skills of riding, roping, shooting, cattle raising, and strong-willed independence. From her gentle father, she learned to be mannerly and generous. The companions of her youth were cowboys and the outlaws who frequented Brown's Hole. Later, Josie was sent to St. Mary's of the Wasatch in Salt Lake City to be educated.

A succession of five husbands made Josie notorious. She divorced four—a scandalous process in those days—and was widowed once. That husband died, most likely of acute alcoholism, although some claimed Josie had poisoned him. She was never free from rumors. When lands near Vernal were opened up for homesteading in 1913, Josie decided to make a new life for herself. She was nearly 40 when she left Brown's Park and found the land she wanted on Cub Creek, 10 miles and two canyons north of Jensen. After a few years she ran her current husband off with a frying pan. However, she had at last found true love in her homestead and made a life-time commitment to it.

For some years Josie's son, Crawford McKnight, and his family lived on her ranch and helped with the work. In 1924 she built a new cabin. While clearing brush for her new gardens, Josie became very frustrated by her long skirts which got in the way. So, she switched to wearing pants—almost unheard of in those days. For work she wore bib overalls; for trips to town she donned western-cut twill trousers. Skirts were reserved for funerals and weddings. One day while working her long, curly red hair, which she coiled on her head, became entangled in the thorns. She cut herself free with an axe and then finished the shearing job with scissors. From then on she wore her hair short. Josie had broken with convention once again and created her own distinctive style.

After the McKnights moved to Jensen, Josie continued ranching on her own. She was remarkably self-sufficient. With her garden, orchard, and the cattle, food was not much of a problem. She canned and made jerky, soap, and clothing. But bare subsistence was not her goal, especially since she was so quick to help those in need, particularly her son and his family. During the Great Depression Josie ran own her relief agency and distributed food to the needy. She even lived in a dugout one winter so a homeless family could use her cabin. After she sold most of her

(more)

cattle to help her son, Josie would sometimes shoot deer out of season to provide meat for herself, her family, or needy neighbors. Necessity dictated this lawless action. Once a game warden stopped by shortly after she had killed a deer. When she invited him in for coffee and biscuits, as she did with most everyone, the warden said he was there to arrest her for poaching. Thinking he was serious, she confessed and took him to the freshly dressed carcass. Astounded, the warden said he had only been joking. Not knowing what to do with this sweet old lady, he let her off with a strong warning and then enjoyed her venison gravy over hot biscuits.

Some things required cash, and so she was always looking for ways to make money. During Prohibition, when she needed cash to help her grandchildren, Josie started brewing bootleg whiskey. She knew it was illegal but she saw nothing morally wrong in it, though she was not a drinker herself. Her brother-in-law got her a copper still which she hid under brush in a gulch. When a batch was properly distilled and aged, she took it in wooden kegs down the canyon to a distributor. She also made personal deliveries to a few preferred customers. Besides whiskey, she became famous in the area for her apricot brandy. She continued bootlegging even after the repeal of Prohibition, ending the practice when she was warned that revenue agents were on the way. She wanted to avoid prison and family disgrace, plus her son threatened to break up the still if she did not stop.

Josie's desire for a "cash crop" got her into serious trouble another time. Neighboring ranchers did not seem to mind if a stray cow got onto Josie's land and ended up as meat for her table. Generally, she kept track of their strays and informed them, which they appreciated. They also appreciated her hospitality—her good coffee, biscuits, and meals and the spare bed she provided on their trips through the area. During the depression, even petty cattle rustling became less tolerable. In 1936 Jim Robinson, an old enemy, accused her of butchering beef and selling it in town. Six ranchers joined in the accusation. Josie was arrested after hides were found buried on her property, but neighbors provided her bail. She contended that Robinson framed her, but the county attorney felt all the evidence pointed to her guilt. Josie played her cards well. She came to court in a dress, smiling graciously and displaying her best manners—looking and acting like a sweet 62-year-old grandmother. The LDS stake president was her defense attorney. When the jury failed to reach a verdict, Josie was retried; again there was a hung jury. The county attorney gave up.

In 1945 Josie hoped to go into the cattle business for profit again but needed cash. After years of squatting on her land, she finally paid the small fee to make the homestead legally hers. Since she could not get a bank loan, she signed her land over to someone who could. Unfortunately, by some misunderstanding, she lost her land. She did, however, retain her cabin and a few acres on a separate adjoining property. There she lived for nearly 20 more years. Her "cash crop" at last came in the form of a pension. In 1963, at age 89, while alone in the cabin, she fell, breaking her hip and experienced terrible agony before she was found. This ended her days on the homestead. Disheartened, she died a few months later, remembered and loved by the people of Jensen and Vernal.

Sources: Grace McClure, *The Bassett Women* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985); Doris Karren Burton, *Dinosaurs and Moonshine: Tales of Josie Morris Bassett and Jensen's Other Unique History and Folklore* (Vernal, Utah: Vincent Brothers, 1990); Robert Redford, *The Outlaw Trail* (New York: Grosset and Dunlop, 1976).

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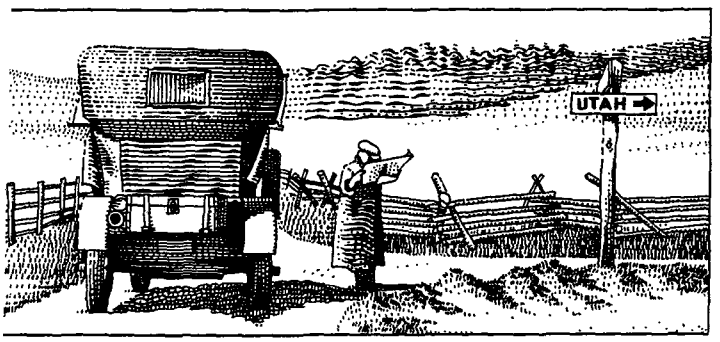

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Provo's Great Gold Brick Scam

IN THE 1970s AND 80s WHEN UTAH was becoming known as the scam capital of America, Utah County had its share of chain letters, pyramid schemes, and unethical business dealings. "Friends" bought soap, diamonds, etc., from "friends" and hoped to resell them to other "friends" at a profit, only to find that they were stuck with enough high-priced soap to last for years. Surprisingly, nobody offered to sell a proverbial "gold" brick. Nearly a hundred years earlier, though, that is exactly what happened. In April 1891 a man calling himself Henry Johnson came to Provo asking the whereabouts of a man named Whitmore. The stranger claimed to have an important message from an old acquaintance. Ex-sheriff J. W. Turner referred him to George C. Whitmore, a Nephi banker, merchant, and sheep man, reputedly worth more than half a million dollars.

Johnson traveled to Nephi to meet Whitmore. The visitor apparently claimed that years ago he, a Spaniard named Da Nacha Naha, and a man named Whitmore were partners in a Mexican mine. After many years of hard work it had recently begun to produce large quantities of gold. Johnson and the Spaniard, anxious to find Whitmore and give him his share of the profits, were camped on the river west of Provo and had in their possession five gold ingots. The Spaniard was distrustful of city people, and the gold bars were worth so much that the two men were afraid to stay in a hotel. Whitmore denied that he was the lucky man but showed an interest in the mine and in traveling to Provo to inspect the gold. The wealthy businessman had formulated a plan that he revealed to Johnson. Though he was not their long-lost partner, maybe he could sell the gold to the mint through his bank and also possibly buy into the mine.

On the afternoon of April 19 the two men boarded the train in Nephi for Provo. Earlier that day a train had pulled into Provo from the north, and an older, dark, sturdy man with short cropped graying hair had gotten off. The conductor recognized him as a notorious gambler and informed the station agent. The agent then notified the police, and they watched the man's movements. When the 3:35 train pulled in from Nephi, the dark man was standing nearby. As Johnson and Whitmore walked past him, he and Johnson recognized each other with a brief bow.

Whitmore and Johnson left the station and proceeded up present University Avenue to the East Co-op where Johnson bought a brace and bit. At the Excelsior livery stable on First West, while Johnson rented a horse and carriage, Whitmore told his friend, Benjamin Bachman, that he was going to look over some land. Whitmore apparently wanted a witness to the meeting with the Spaniard and had arranged with ex-sheriff Turner to accompany him to the camp near the Provo River. Whitmore, Johnson, and Turner traveled to the western edge of town. There, Johnson told the ex-lawman the Spaniard would be suspicious and would perhaps refuse to meet with them if

(more)

Turner came into the camp, so Turner hid and watched the proceedings from a distance.

At the camp Whitmore was shown two gold bricks about 4 by 4 by 16 inches, one weighing 36 pounds and the other 38. Whitmore calculated their worth at about $17,000 and asked for samples. The brace and bit were produced, and the banker began to drill sample filings from the first bar. When the bit broke off in it, Johnson offered to finish the drilling. He spread a newspaper on his lap, set the bar on it, and bored into it and the second bar. He put the filings into an envelope. Whitmore scratched his name into the bottom of each ingot and pocketed the envelope with the filings. He agreed to advance $6,000 on the bricks, and when he sold them he would pay Johnson and the Spaniard the balance. The Nephi businessman was to receive a profit on the sale of the bricks and a share in the mine on very reasonable terms. Whitmore took the samples to Mr. Beck, a Provo jeweler, who tested them three times and pronounced them genuine.

At 9 the next morning Cashier Dusenberry of the First National Bank had the money waiting for Whitmore. Albert Glazier, the teller, counted out $4,000 in gold, $500 in silver, and $1,500 in currency. The potential partners returned to the riverside camp where Whitmore got the gold bricks with his name scratched in the bottom, and Johnson and his swarthy friend got the money. The agreement was finalized with a drink from a bottle provided by Whitmore, the Spaniard insisting that the banker take the first drink in case the liquor was poisoned.

An ecstatic Whitmore was back in town by 10 o'clock. The associates parted, Whitmore going to the office of Colonel Moore, a representative of the Utah, Nevada, and California Railroad, and Johnson leaving for what he hoped were parts unknown. Moore took some scrapings from the bricks and, to the amazement of both men, when these filings were put in acid they caused a reaction. When they were taken to be assayed, the bricks proved to be composed of almost pure copper. Apparently the envelope with the copper filings in it had, by some sleight of hand, been replaced by one that contained filings of real gold.

Whitmore sprang into action, offering a sizeable reward and alerting local law officers who in turn spread the word throughout northern Utah. William Leonard, a man answering the description of the Spaniard, was the gambler who got off the train in Provo on April 19. He was arrested and released on bail to await examination before a grand jury. In early October 1891 a grand jury dismissed the case against Leonard for lack of evidence, and he was turned loose. In mid-November officers in California caught Larry King and he was returned to Utah to face charges. It should come as no surprise that, when freed on an $800 bond, he jumped bond and did not turn up for his trial in 1892. Law officers believed at least one more man was involved in the swindle. George Lewis, a gambler and general ne'er-do-well, was suspected of masterminding the gold brick scam. He was killed in Ogden in March 1893 before his guilt could be proven. As for Whitmore, he had two copper ingots worth $5 or $6 and enough experience to last a lifetime.

Sources: *Provo Daily Enquirer*, April 21, 1891-March 16, 1893; *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 22-November 20, 1891; and *Salt Lake Herald*, April 22-November 20, 1891.

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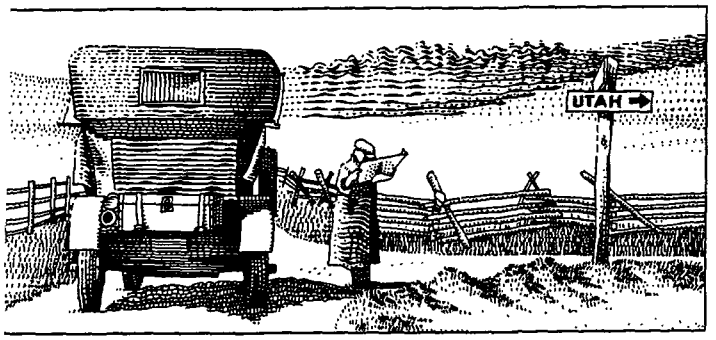

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The Industrial Army's Utah Connection

THE NATIONWIDE DEPRESSION OF THE 1890s—the second worst in U.S. History—spawned a number of movements to alleviate unemployment. One of the biggest was the Commonweal of Christ (dubbed by others the "Industrial Army") movement launched by Jacob S. Coxey, a wealthy Ohio businessman. In Utah the movement caused a sensation involving government officials, railroad companies, and hundreds of Utah workers. It also spawned a second "Army" led by a young Utah worker.

Coxey suggested that the federal government could assist the unemployed by commissioning a network of "good roads." He organized groups of unemployed workers to march on Washington to pressure the government. The "Industrial Army" (a term Coxey hated) movement gained support in California where the unemployed planned to travel east on the railroad, via Ogden.

Utah Territory was already suffering about 25 percent unemployment, and Governor Caleb W. West objected to the presence of more unemployed and possibly desperate outsiders in Utah. He called out the militia to cordon off the "Army" when it arrived in Ogden on April 8, 1894. Officials obtained an injunction keeping the "Army" in "camp" at the terminal. Coxey's followers remained at the railroad station for several days, displaying generally good behavior and gaining local popular support while government and railroad officials negotiated their further passage. Southern Pacific officials argued that the "soldiers'" fare was only paid through Ogden and that they could not ride without further payment. The "Army" took action on April 11, marching to Uintah and capturing a freight train bound for Wyoming, to the relief of Utah officials.

In Salt Lake City the Workingmen's Association met to denounce the governor and to create an "Army" of its own under Henry E. Carter, a young carpenter. "Soldiers" swore allegiance to the U.S. Constitution and pledged to honor all laws as well as property rights. "General" Carter attempted to raise transportation funds for the 600-700 man "Army" but despite much public sympathy could not reach an agreement with the railroad companies. On April 30 the defiant "Army" set out for Washington on foot.

Carter continued to demand transportation and continued to receive no help from the railroads. On May 12, about 40 "Industrialists" boarded a Union Pacific train headed for Lehi where they captured a passenger train. At Geneva, the rest of the "Army" was loaded on and taken to Provo where the train was ditched. Governor West called out the militia and raced police and judicial authorities to Provo. Carter and other leaders were arrested, found guilty of contempt, and sentenced to light fines and five days in prison. The "Army" scattered, some giving up the march, while others proceeded east, the railroads apparently deciding that giving the men free

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passage was preferable to hijacking. Upon his release, Carter joined his "Army" in Colorado and continued east. Carter's "Army" did not leave Utah without casualties however. According to historian Carlos Schwantes, "Some women resented their husbands joining the crusade. Two women drove to General Carter's bivouac outside Salt Lake City, broke through the picket lines, and returned with a sheepish-looking man in tow. As angry words were exchanged, one woman ended the argument with a blow to the face of her 'liege lord.' She exclaimed loudly that she would thrash any man who would desert his wife and children to follow a 'will-o'-the wisp' across the deserts of the West. The case of Mary Cook was different. When her husband left Salt Lake City with Carter's army, she ran out of money to feed herself and her child and forged a check for $10.15. Confronted and humiliated by the bank which detected the forgery, she returned home, swallowed strychnine, and died in terrible convulsions. Had she lived in Salt Lake City, where various support groups were active, instead of tiny Pleasant Grove, things might have been different."

While some 30,000 of "Coxey's Army" eventually made it to Washington, mass arrests of marchers throughout the West and Midwest deprived the movement of reinforcements. The Industrial Army idea generated much sympathy but little government action, and by June 1894, the movement was largely over.

Sources: *Salt Lake Tribune*, April, May, June 1894; Carlos A. Schwantes, "Western Women in Coxey's Army in 1894," *Arizona and the West* 26 (Spring 1984).

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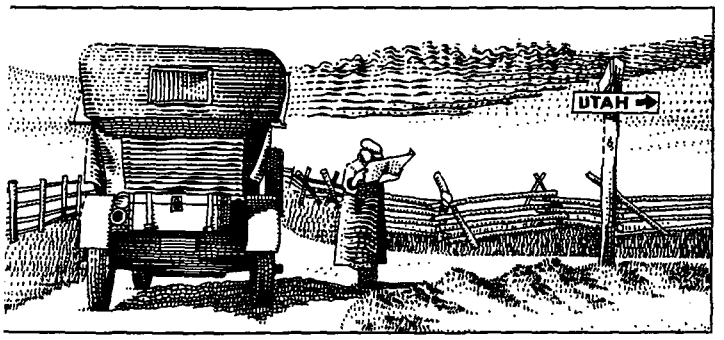

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Disaster in Wyoming: Caring for Survivors in 1856

WHEN THE FROZEN, EMACIATED SURVIVORS FROM THE Willie and Martin handcart companies and the Hodgett and Hunt wagon trains arrived in Utah in November and December of 1856, they were greeted with enormous kindness and generosity. They had been stranded by blizzards in Wyoming until a heroic relief effort from Utah saved many of their lives. Despite famine conditions in the settlements, people donated tons of flour and other foodstuffs, and men risked their own lives to drive wagons loaded with food, bedding, and clothing to the suffering immigrants and carry them back to the Salt Lake Valley. This massive and selfless rescue response was one of Utah's finest hours. However, the relief effort continued for months after the survivors arrived and was equally important although less dramatic.

Mormon bishops carried out the relief effort. They collected the food, clothing, bedding, wagons, and teams that were sent to Wyoming and then sent more food, wagons, teams, and men to meet them and keep the roads open through the snowy Wasatch Mountains. The bishops' work continued after the immigrants arrived. In the early stages of the relief, the Salt Lake bishops carried much of the burden, but, later, bishops throughout the territory became involved. They found homes for those who had neither friends nor relatives with whom to stay. They continued to collect food donations to distribute to the destitute. Bishops in all parts of Utah sent wagons to Salt Lake City to bring families to their settlements so that the weight of caring for the survivors would be shared.

Utah women also responded quickly to the need. Lucy Merserve Smith said that when Brigham Young in October Conference called for clothing, the ladies began to strip off petticoats, stockings, and everything else they could spare right in the Tabernacle. Though impoverished themselves, women sacrificed their own families' small clothing supply to help the immigrants, most of whom arrived in tattered summer clothing. To meet the urgent need, Relief Societies were formed in many settlements, and the women began making quilts and clothing and knitting socks. In Provo, for instance, Lucy Merserve Smith, Relief Society president, and her counselors organized women to prepare for survivors sent to Provo. They collected so much bedding and clothing that the four bishops could barely carry it to storage. Whatever was needed for the immigrants Smith could get without charge from the bishop's store. She and her counselors waded through deep snow to collect things and deliver notices. Provo women made 27 quilts and a great amount of clothing that winter. The same scenes were undoubtedly repeated in many other settlements.

At Sunday services on November 30, Brigham Young announced that the afternoon meeting was cancelled so that the people could care for those immigrants expected to arrive then. When 104

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wagons filled with the remnants of the Martin company stopped in front of the tithing office, crowds stood ready to take the survivors into their homes and hearts. As the immigrants were lifted from the wagons, the Salt Lakers could see the challenge they would have to meet. Many arrivals were emaciated, their shabby clothing hanging loosely from their thin bodies. Many had severely frozen limbs that would require intense nursing, even amputation. Some had already undergone the gruesome procedure. Others were so weak they could not stand alone. All needed to be fed and washed, and many needed medical attention. During the next two weeks the Hunt and Hodgett wagon companies would arrive nearly as destitute. The work of relief was truly just beginning.

As they had when the Willie company arrived earlier in November, Utahns provided housing for the survivors of the disaster. Within about an hour, all the members of the Martin company had been distributed by the bishops to homes in Salt Lake City and surrounding communities. Pattie Sessions was sent a 17-year-old boy to care for; she dressed his frozen feet and clothed him. The next day he was sent to Provo. Over the next few days, many would likewise be relocated to the settlements from Ogden on the north to Cedar City, Parowan, and Harmony on the south. Homes for 141 were found by Provo bishops. Families shared their homes for months before the newcomers were healthy enough to move on. Handcart families often had to be split up among several homes as cabins and houses filled to capacity. Beds and bedding were shared. Jobs were given to those able to work. Food supplies were stretched to the limit. No one lived lavishly that winter because of the famine; nearly everyone was hungry, but the people shared whatever they had.

Frozen toes, feet, legs, and hands required immediate care. Decaying flesh and fear of infection, particularly gangrene, led to many amputations. However, the *Deseret News* warned people to not be too hasty with the knife and saw but to treat the frozen flesh patiently with good nursing. The article included a remedy. Through the long winter months women nursed the bedridden, many of whom were children and totally helpless. For many, the process of healing was excruciatingly slow.

For some Utahns who took in orphaned children, care would continue for years. The Silas Richards family of Union, for example, took the three little Osborne girls whose parents had died in the Willie company. The girls could hardly walk and were malnourished and frostbitten. They had no shoes or woolen stockings, their only clothing the remnants of summer apparel. Widows and their children, taken into other families, sometimes became part of the family by marriage.

The citizens of Utah acted valiantly in coming to the aid of the disastrous late immigration of 1856. Their generous care saved lives and gave survivors the opportunity to begin again.

Sources: Rebecca Bartholomew and Leonard J. Arrington, *Rescue of the 1856 Handcart Companies* (Provo: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, 1982); Lucy Merserve Smith, "Narrative," LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City; Pattie Sessions, Journal, LDS Church Archives; Silas Richards, "Autobiography," in Kate Carter, ed., *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1972), vol 15; *Deseret News Weekly*, various issues in October, November, and December 1856; J. Marinus Jensen, *History of Provo, Utah* (Provo, 1924).

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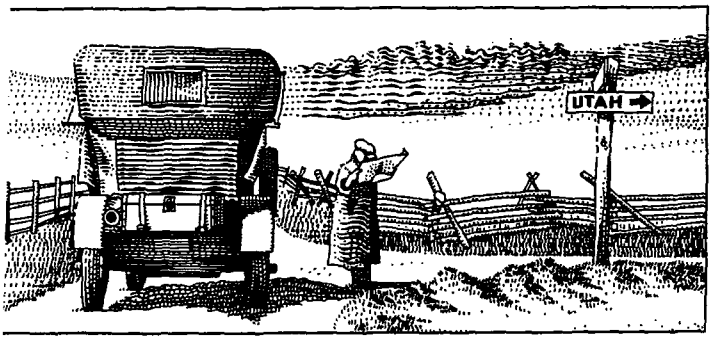

THE HISTORY BLAZER

NEWS OF UTAH'S PAST FROM THE

Utah State Historical Society

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Musician and Artist Samuel H. Jepperson

C.C.A. CHRISTENSEN WAS NOT THE ONLY DANISH-BORN ARTIST to cross the plains in the Christensen handcart company of 1857. Traveling with his father and mother in that same group was Samuel Hans Jepperson, born in Copenhagen in 1854. Although Jepperson never achieved the same renown as Christensen, his history is perhaps more intriguing, and his artistic contribution rivals that of his older countryman. In Salt Lake City, Nils Jepperson, Samuel's father, worked for a year on a dairy farm. In the fall of 1858 he moved his family to Provo where they lived for a while in their wagon box before settling into a small cabin at First South and Fifth West. Samuel spent much of his youth helping his father earn a scant living. Very early in life, though, he yearned for art and music. His father, a very practical man, considered artistic activities a waste of time.

The budding artist was not completely discouraged, however. At the old Second Ward School, Samuel filled every margin of his arithmetic book with drawings and drew on any scrap of paper he could find. Consumed with the urge to paint, but with no money for supplies, he made his first brush by tying small feathers to a smooth stick and concocted paints from berries, mustard, leaves, and roots. Then he found he could mix dried house paints. Late in life he remembered obtaining his first real paints from "old Mrs. Savory." He hung around her until she had to give him some paints. He lay awake nights thinking about those colors. He also found musical fulfillment. His first instrument, a Jew's harp, contented him for a while, but eventually he wanted something more sophisticated—a violin—but he had to make it himself. He drilled holes in an old cigar box and attached a neck and four strings. Then, with a homemade bow, he learned to play it.

At age 13, a fortuitous opportunity came his way while his father was in Echo Canyon working on the construction of the transcontinental railroad. It was Samuel's responsibility to provide his mother with firewood for the winter and to cut enough wild hay from the lowlands near the lake to feed the animals. He had finished with these chores when, George Evans, a neighbor who had now wagon of his own, offered to trade his violin for four loads of building logs from nearby Slate Canyon. Samuel hurried to seek his mother's approval. When she reminded him that he had no shoes, Samuel said he would go barefoot. After several days of hard labor, the boy had the logs and was awarded with his prize—one poor violin. Its condition did not stop him from learning to play it, but his father almost did. Samuel was not permitted to practice the instrument at home because that would brand him as lazy, so he practiced in the bam where he could not be heard. Soon he was good enough to play for small dances and house parties. Next, he and his musical friends organized a quadrille band that for several decades played for hundreds of dances. Music

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also helped Samuel find a wife. He gave guitar lessons to Minnie Johnson, a daughter of J. P. R. Johnson, the Danish bishop of the Provo First Ward. Over time the couple concluded that their interests extended beyond music, and they drove to Salt Lake City to be married on July 11, 1879. They built a home on the corner of Third South and Fourth West in Provo. In 1884 Samuel organized the 20-member Provo City Silver Band which he conducted for 30 years before turning those duties over to his son. Besides playing music, Samuel enjoyed making instruments. Over the years he made 180 guitars, 50 violins, and a number of cellos, violas, and double bass viols.

Samuel also developed as an artist while pursuing his musical talents. In 1871, at age 17, he took up house painting with Henry J. Maiben, a master painter from England who taught Samuel drawing and fine art. John Selck, who also worked for Maiben, was a fine artist from Germany. He instructed Samuel in scenery painting and fine art. Selck and Jepperson painted scenery for the Provo Opera House. By the mid-1880s Samuel had begun to earn a reputation as a skillful oil painter. About that time, lead poisoning brought his 15-year career as a house painter to an end, and he was forced to rely on other sources of income. He cut and delivered ice from Utah Lake and caught fish and shot ducks for the local market. He painted backdrops for local photographers and also began to finish more oil paintings which were sometimes raffled off or sold to the highest bidder. In 1891 he painted a nude for Knight Brother's Saloon. This 9 x 12-foot painting was not the traditional bar nude; it depicted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. His association with other Utah artists, such as Dan Weggeland, John Hafen, James T. Harwood, Alfred Lambourne, and John Fairbanks, helped Samuel, as did New York painter George Henry Taggart who spent two summers in Provo hoping to improve his wife's health. The couple camped on a lot across from the Jeppersons, and Taggart helped Samuel refine his technique.

Out of economic necessity, Samuel bought a parcel of land near Provo Bay and began farming for a living, but he continued to paint. He would take his easel and paints to the farm and paint part of the day. During the next four decades he continued to farm and paint, eventually finishing over 1,000 paintings, most of them landscapes or depictions of historical themes. One of his favorite subjects was a wheat field north of his farm. A granddaughters recalled, "He especially loved it because it faced north—so Mt. Timpanogas...[was] in the back-ground and there were various sized clumps of Willow Trees—edging the north end of the field which gave it 'character' he said. He painted that field in various years and from various angles—all a bit different...."

In or near this field Samuel met his death one June morning in 1931. He was helping his son and another farmer spray an apple orchard. Samuel was driving the wagon when the front wheels struck a ditch. The horses slowed up and then lunged forward. When the rear wheels struck the ditch, Samuel was thrown to the ground, breaking his neck. A rare Sunday afternoon funeral honored early Provo's favorite musician and artist. Harrison R. Merrill said of him, "He had lived a simple life, unsung, unappreciated, but not unloved. To know him is to love him."

Sources: Grace H. Croft, *With a Song in Her Heart: Biography of Dr. Florence Jepperson Maadsen* (Salt Lake City, 1960); Florence Jepperson Madsen, "A Sketch of the Life of Samuel Jepperson, Sr.," in Kate B. Carter, comp., *Heart Throbs of the West*, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939-50), 2:471-72; H. R. Merrill, "Samuel Jepperson: A Pioneer with A Singing Soul," *Improvement Era*, 29:755-57; *Provo Herald*, June 8, 1930, June 2, 1931.

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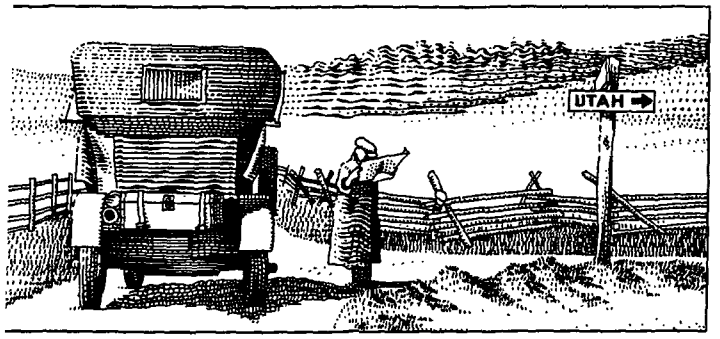

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NEWS OF UTAH'S PAST FROM THE

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John Wesley Powell's Headquarters at Kanab

WHEN JOHN WESLEY POWELL'S CREW OF TOPOGRAPHERS, geologists, other scientists, artists, and photographers arrived in Kanab in 1871, the settlement was in its infancy. Only a few scattered houses stood outside the fort. Fruit trees, shade trees and vines were just getting a start. Yet the town was a haven for men who had just spent grueling weeks voyaging down the Green and Colorado rivers. Malnourished and exhausted, the men had a chance to recuperate and improve their diet in Kanab. Furthermore, the location was ideal for pursuing further geographic investigations of the Colorado Plateau. The town was Powell's field headquarters during 1871-73. Powell's second expedition down the Green and Colorado in 1871 and his mapping and survey work during the next two years have been overshadowed by his dramatic first expedition in 1869. Yet, the later methodical investigations provided the scientific data so valuable in understanding the physical features of the Colorado Plateau. The headquarters in Kanab were extremely important to the field investigations and the production of maps and photographs. From this base camp the survey fanned out in all directions. Kanab supplied the survey crew with food, services, and employees. On the personal side, residents gave the men, far from home, friends, and family, the social interaction that brightened their days.

Powell's brother-in-law and chief assistant, Almon Harris Thompson, set up the base camp a few miles south of Kanab (actually in Arizona) in the fall of 1871, following the major's directions. There the crew made short forays into the surrounding area, worked on their maps, and analyzed field data. In town they could buy butter, milk, cheese, molasses, meat, potatoes, and vegetables; pick up their mail and send letters; find blacksmiths and woodworkers to make repairs, make posts for their survey flags and other necessary items, and shoe their horses and mules; and hire young men to herd their animals, freight supplies, and work as helpers during the survey.

One of the best things the village offered that first winter was a social life. Dances were held often in the Kanab schoolhouse, and the members of Powell's crew attended. At first the Mormon girls were reluctant to interact with the men, but as time passed they accepted the surveyors and friendships developed. Captain Francis M. Bishop joined a debating group, and some of the crew took tea or dined with townspeople.

During that first winter the men established a baseline that ran for nine miles south of Kanab and made triangulations and other measurements in preparation for more field work the following summer. Thompson, or the "Prof" as he was called, was in charge of this work. His wife, Ellen Powell Thompson (who collected botanical specimens), and her dog Fuzz lived in the camp, as did Major Powell, his wife Emma Dean, and their infant daughter for part of the winter.

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During the spring and summer of 1872 the crew traveled south to the Grand Canyon, east to the Paria River, west to the Beaver Dam Mountains, and north into the High Plateau country with Kanab as the center of operations. That fall they reestablished headquarters camp at Kanab, this time right in town. Major Powell had gone east on business, so the "Prof" was again in charge. He rented a town lot and set up tents with wooden floors. Two small tents were for storage. A large tent housed the men, and the Thompsons occupied another tent. In the center of the crew's tent was a long drafting table for map work. A conical iron stove kept them warm. The telescope and transit were set up on a stone foundation under a canopy that could be retracted for observations. A kitchen-dining tent was also set up. In addition to basic food items, the crew was also able to buy some Dixie wine in the area. The men entered into the town's social life as they had the year before. They visited friends around town and received visitors as well. They were part of the life of the community.

Through the first part of December they continued their field work, branching out through the area. During the worst part of winter, they worked up their maps and expedition findings. The first preliminary map of the Grand Canyon was made in the tent in Kanab that winter. When it was finished in February 1873, a local tinsmith made the tube in which Frederick Dellenbaugh transported the map north to Salt Lake City for shipment east.

While Powell's men lived in Kanab, the local citizens benefitted greatly. Native Americans tanned buckskin for the crew. Local women were paid to sew the buckskin into coats, shirts, gloves, and breeches and to do other sewing, mending, or baking for the men. Thomas Robertson, the blacksmith, earned money for shoeing the horses and mules, setting tires, and mending wagons. Men from Kanab were essential to the field work of the scientists through 1872 and 1873. Many were employed as guides, packers, and survey helpers. The surveyors considered the Mormons to be excellent workers. One very important role of the Utah men was to transport supplies to the crews in the field during their frequent expeditions.

As time went on, Powell turned more of his attention to studying the Native Americans and more of the geologic work fell to Thompson. Powell visited many local tribes, learning of their cultures and documenting them. While in the Kanab area he also had time to observe the irrigation practices of the Mormon settlers and noted their cooperative use of water resources. These observations were important to formulating his ideas on land and water use in arid regions.

The years 1871 through 1873 were productive for Major John Wesley Powell, Almon Thompson, and the geologic survey of the Colorado Plateau. The little city of Kanab and its citizens played important roles in their success.

Sources: Adonis Findlay Robinson, comp., *History of Kane County* (Salt Lake City: Kane County Daughters of Utah Pioneers and Kane County Commissioners, 1970); Wallace Stegner, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* (Boston, 1953); Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *Romance of the Colorado River* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902); Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *A Canyon Voyage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926); Almon Harris Thompson, "Diary," in *Utah Historical Quarterly* 7 (1939); Francis M. Bishop, "Journal," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 15 (1947).

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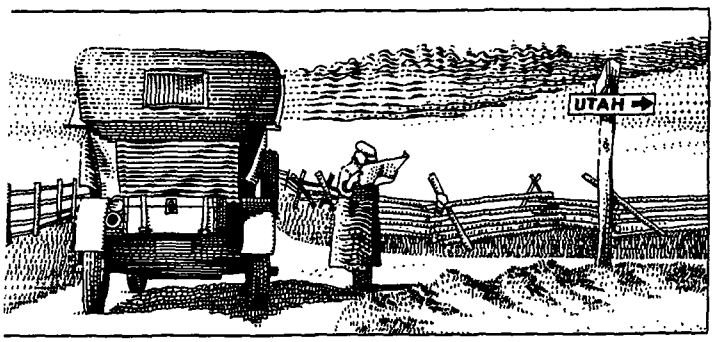

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Utah's Most Treacherous Stretch of "Road"

IN DECEMBER 1879 COLONISTS HEADED TOWARD THE San Juan River country to settle discovered their way blocked by the canyon of the Colorado River. Before them, a notch in the rock too narrow for a wagon led to a passage that perhaps could be made into a road to the river 1,800 feet below. As impossible as it seemed, they really had no choice: mountain passes closed by snow and their stubbornness would not allow them to turn back. It seemed that the road, if they could widen the notch, would have to go down the chute at an incredible angle, the first fifty feet the worst at about 50 percent downgrade. It would be a wild ride. In wretched winter weather they put in six weeks of back-breaking effort and lived with their families in their wagons. With nothing but their grit and some picks, shovels, chisels, rock drills, sledge hammers, and a bit of blasting powder, they hacked a road out of rock that would become known as the Hole-in-the-Rock.

Initially, the notch at the rim had to be widened enough to allow a team and wagon to go through. Benjamin and Hyrum Perkins, experienced rock workers, led the crew of "blasters and blowers." Tons of rock had to be broken and moved. Men in half-barrels, dangling by ropes over the rim, drilled holes in the rock face and inserted black-powder charges to explode away the obstruction. With powder in short supply, much of the rock had to be chipped away with the available tools. Rock debris was used to fill low areas in the canyon going down to the river; in some places the fill was many feet deep. One section of the road, toward the bottom, looked hopeless to construct. The cliff face dropped off abruptly. It seemed impossible to get past it until Ben Perkins master-minded a way to tack a road—known as "Uncle Ben's Dugway"—onto the sheer cliff. Again, by suspending men by ropes, the crew chiseled out a ledge wide enough for the inside wagon wheels. About five feet below the ledge they drilled deep holes at intervals in the rock face and inserted sturdy scrub oak posts into them. They covered the posts with thick layers of brush and gravel, making the road bed level with the ledge they had cut in the rock. Just wide enough for a wagon, the road actually hung out from the side of the cliff and angled down toward the river. By January 26, 1880, the road that sweat, muscle and will-power had built was ready for use. By the end of the first week of February all the wagons of the company and their large cattle herd had descended the 'chute' safely and crossed the Colorado River. Each wagon down took a bit of the road with it!

Only Platte D. Lyman kept a contemporary journal. On January 26 he recorded: "Today we worked all the wagons in this camp down the 'Hole' and ferried 26 of them across the river...." His terse statement conveys no idea of what a thrilling and dangerous adventure it was. But the

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memory remained vivid in the minds of the participants who later described their personal experiences making the plunge through the Hole-in-the-Rock. Whose wagon went down first is controversial, but likely it was Hy Perkins's wagon with Kumen Jones's team with Jones as driver. Ben Perkins had been offered the honor but declined in favor of his brother. Evidently, Hy's team did not want the honor either. So Jones hitched his well-broken team to Hy's wagon. The rear wheels were rough-locked with chains to guard against brake failure and a run-away. Ten to 20 men held the wagon back with long ropes to keep it from plummeting out of control. With those precautions, the first team made it safely to the bottom. The same routine was followed for the rest of the wagons. George W. Decker remembered that one team of horses was blind, perhaps decreasing their fear of the steep road. They carefully felt their way down. He also recalled the excitement of the chattering, laughing, cheering crowd of observers watching the wagons descend.

William Naylor Eyre remembered that it was so steep that horses as well as men were used to hold back the wagons. Occasionally the animals would lose balance and be dragged. When the teams were reluctant to approach the 'chute,' the wagons were pushed against them to get them moving. Then the outfit would shoot almost straight down that thrilling first 40 feet. Soft gravelly landings created by the fill areas slowed down the wild ride in places, but women and children prudently walked, sliding over the steepest spots. Joseph Stanford Smith and his wife Arabella were the last of the first group to go down. With no one at the top to help they left two young children and a baby at the top. Smith drove the team over the edge while his wife and another horse tried to hold the wagon back; both of them fell and were dragged over sharp rocks, and Arabella leg was badly slashed. After checking on his wife, Smith rushed back to the top for the children. Joseph Barton, who had hurried ahead of the second group, also took the plunge alone just about sundown. He rough-locked his wheels, and after considerable urging got his team to face the terrifying drop. It took only a half-minute to arrive at the first soft area 300 feet down. His chain had snapped, but luckily it had flipped around in such a way that the wheels remained locked.

Out of necessity the road became two-way. The challenge of going up was every bit as difficult as going down and required more effort. According to John Holyoak, two men were sent back for supplies. Their wagon had to be disassembled 2and taken up in parts so the team could make the upward grade through the Hole. In the spring when Platte D. Lyman returned up the Hole, he and his companions had to unload everything they could and pack it to the top. It took the five-horse team half a day of hard work to pull the wagon to the top, less than a mile away.

The road was abandoned in 1881 when it was replaced by the Hall's Crossing route. Although the life of Utah's most treacherous three-quarter mile road was short, it was exciting and demonstrated the triumph of pioneer inventiveness, determination, and courage.

Sources: David E. Miller, *Hole-in-the-Rock: An Epic in the Colonization of the Great American West* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1959); Wallace Stegner, *Mormon Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1942); Gustive O. Larson and Charles S. Peterson, "Opening the Colorado Plateau" in Richard D. Poll, et al., *Utah's History* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1989).

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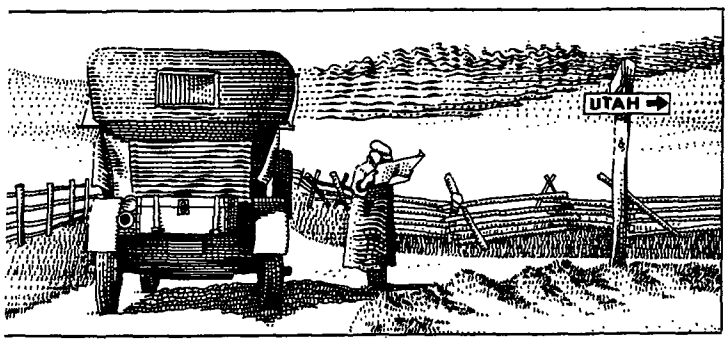

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Boys Will Be Boys 19th-Century Style

IN THIS DAY OF POOH-POOH CUSHIONS, birthday candles that do not blow out, and plastic ice cubes with flies laminated inside, did you ever wonder what kinds of pranks boys played on the unsuspecting in 19th-century Utah? A study of early newspapers leads one to conclude that lack of funds and a limited technological base required them to use more individual skill and ingenuity and fewer store-bought gags. A little streak of mischievousness also helped. For instance, some boys living in the west end of Provo had a favorite trick they liked to play on women or children who were home alone at night. On windy evenings they clandestinely fixed a string to the top of a window casing and attached a small piece of lead to the bottom of the string. Propelled by the breeze, the lead would incessantly tap on the window pane. Hopefully, this mysterious noise would frighten the inhabitants of the house. Sometimes this trick was too successful. The Provo newspaper reported that a woman whose husband was away one blustery April night in 1889 was almost scared to death by such a prank. The editor warned the boys to desist from such activities and save themselves from a thrashing that would be given to them by a man on the watch for such activities. The pranksters were admonished to remember that "what is fun to some, is death to others."

Other tricks used by pranksters to snare or trip people were also potentially dangerous. The local paper called the young hoodlum element of Provo's Fourth and Fifth wards a disgrace. These puckish youths quietly met near schools and other public buildings when meetings were in progress to prepare pitfalls on the streets and stretch strings across sidewalks. One September evening in 1892 a ladies dress reform meeting in the Central School was their target. Luckily, the Board of Education was meeting in another room of the school. The board adjourned before the ladies did, found the obstacles, and removed them. Such pranks were decried by the public at large.

Even though churches played an important part in the community—or possibly because they tried to play a strong role in shaping the behavior of youths—they were not immune from pranks. In April 1888 two young men secretly met near Provo's Third Ward on the evening of choir practice. Earlier in the day the two had evidently nailed fast the windows of the church. When the choir was comfortably ensconced inside, the boys then fastened the two handles of the double outside doors together with a rope. Needless to say, the choir experienced considerable difficulty in exiting the building. The boys were caught and fined five dollars each for their disconcerting actions.

Another musical prank was, perhaps, more lighthearted and might have been enjoyed by a segment of the population. A traveling blind musician appeared on the streets of Provo one day and, doubtlessly hoping for contributions, proceeded to provide the town with hand-organ music. He had been in town several days when one evening three young wags hatched what they considered

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an amusing plan. They blacked their faces, donned goggles, snatched the unattended hand-organ, and went on a lark serenading the town. No editorial commented on the quality of their music.

Many other gags inconvenienced the public at large. For several years a train ran from the bank corner in the center of town to the Provo Lake Resort on Utah Lake. Young scoundrels would sometimes wait in hiding near the tracks and hitch a free ride by jumping onto the rear car of the train. One balmy night in the late summer of 1892 the youths tried unsuccessfully to catch a ride on the train. In an effort to slow the train down or make it stop they set up a cry as though someone were hurt. A passenger pulled the emergency bell rope, but it failed to work. The train had traveled some distance up the track before the engineer was finally notified and stopped the train. Some riders went back with a lantern and the train was backed up to receive the wounded. When it turned out to be a joke, the uncomfortably crowded passengers on board were not amused. Conductor R. H. Dodd summed it all up in one word of frustration, "Damn!"

Some pranks were boldly perpetrated in full daylight. One summer day in 1881 some older youths in Spanish Fork visited Dr. Shoebridge's drugstore. After helping themselves to ample portions of a very special "cough medicine," the boys left the shop in a state of semi-drunkenness. They tied a can to the tail of a dog belonging to a customer of a general store. Not satisfied with that bit of mischief, they pulled the connecting pin out of the reach pole of a wagon parked in the street. One can imagine the effects of that after the wagon had traveled a short distance down the road. Housewives looked with particular displeasure on one trick played by callous youths. After the women had worked over scrub boards and hot water all morning and hung their clothes out to dry, it must have been extremely disconcerting to see the clotheslines cut and the newly washed garments dragging in the dirt. The Provo paper theorized that if the culprits could be caught, a day or so of convict wood sawing might civilize them.

In the 1880s the December meetings of the Salvation Army in Provo were subjected to a number of indignities. One memorable prank must have taken considerable thought and coordination. Several well-rehearsed hoodlums attended the philanthropic organization's Monday night meeting. The prank began when the Army's captain was delivering a fervent sermon in which he cried out, "O Lord Jesus! Let the fire from heaven descend among this congregation." No sooner had he uttered these words than a string of firecrackers which had been attached to the coat tail of a young man in the audience was lighted. With the small explosives erupting in his wake, he darted from his seat and rushed up onto the stage, scattering confusion among the people. According to the Provo newspaper's account, "Women fainted, men yelled for police, and the hoodlums added to the scene by singing, "The Lamb, the Lamb, the Bleeding Lamb." By then the congregation had recovered enough to rush toward the outside door. When it was flung open, they were greeted by another surprise—a man dressed up as an Indian chief armed with a tomahawk. Complaints were sworn out against three of the ringleaders, who were lectured, fined, and released by Justice Booth.

Keep these 19th-century pranks in mind the next time neighborhood youths toilet paper your home. It may make it easier to shrug and say, "Boys will be boys."

Sources: *Provo Territorial Enquirer*, 1879-87; *Utah Enquirer*, 1888-89; *Daily Enquirer*, 1889-93.

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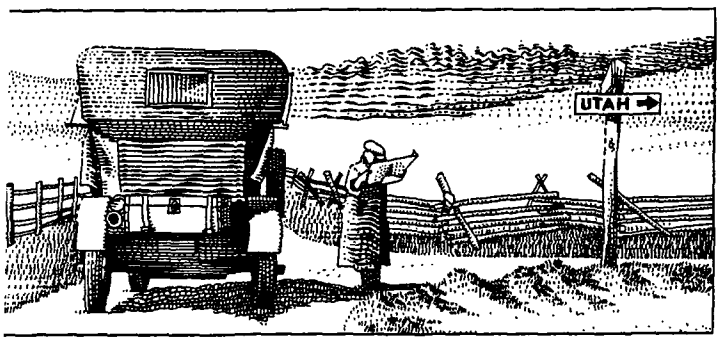

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Important Visitors at Fort Uinta

WHEN ANTOINE ROBIDOUX ESTABLISHED FORT UINTA near the forks of the Uinta River and White Rocks Creek in northeastern Utah in 1832, he was able to engage in a thriving fur and horse trading business as well as illegal traffic in guns and alcohol to the Indians. Robidoux built his fort on the site of an earlier post purchased from William Reed. It was a convenient location in the heart of good fur country, and many mountain men visited the fort, including such notables as Kit Carson, Joe Meek, and Miles Goodyear who trapped the Uinta, Green, and other northeastern Utah rivers and their tributaries. Native Americans, particularly the Utes, lived in the vicinity. Trade with them was brisk and profitable for Robidoux since he could buy pelts relatively cheaply and sell them at good prices in Santa Fe. He could supply his post with trade goods purchased on trips to New Mexico. Some believe that Robidoux may also have been involved in the Indian slave trade, perhaps with women as a prime trade item, although more documentation is needed on that subject.

Isolated as the location seems, Robidoux's fort (also called Fort Wintey, Tewinty, Uintah, and Robidoux) saw a fair amount of traffic, especially in the 1840s as whites other than trappers began to pass through the area. One early visitor, the Reverend Joseph Williams, left a record of his stay at Fort Uinta. He had traveled to Oregon in 1841 and was returning to the East in 1842. A highly moralistic man, he left a colorful account of life at Fort Uinta when his route took him there in the summer of 1842. Swarms of flies and the rugged terrain of northeastern Utah made traveling difficult. Williams's group journeyed down the "Wintey" (Uinta) River to arrive at Fort Uinta. Robidoux and some of his men would accompany them to New Mexico, but Robidoux was not ready to depart, so Williams had to wait for 18 days. The delay gave him plenty of time to observe life at the trading post. It thoroughly disgusted him. The wickedness, drunkenness, and swearing disturbed him. He was especially upset by the debauchery of the men who bought and sold the Indian women. The mountain men delighted in telling him stories of depraved behavior that horrified him. In Williams's mind Fort Uinta was equal to any place for sin and wickedness.

The minister's judgments may have been too harsh since other visitors to the fort either overlooked or did not see the depravity reported by him. Rufus Sage was also a visitor later in 1842, having traveled with Robidoux from Taos to Fort Uinta. Sage mentioned nothing about the iniquity at the fort but tended strictly to business matters. According to his account, trapping parties came to the fort to trade. Snake and Utah Indians bartered beaver, otter, deer, mountain sheep, and elk skins for ammunition, guns, knives, tobacco, beads, awls, etc. Native Americans traded finely finished skins for just a few rounds of ammunition or other items because game was very abundant. Sage noted how profitable the business was for the fort's owner.

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Marcus Whitman stopped at Fort Uinta early in November 1842 on his way east to seek support for his mission in the Northwest. Traveling with him was Asa L. Lovejoy, who left a record of the trip. At Fort Hall they were told by Richard Grant, the Hudson's Bay factor, to avoid the South Pass route because of Indian hostilities. Lovejoy and Whitman picked up a guide and headed for Santa Fe via Fort Uinta. On the way Whitman met his old friend Miles Goodyear who had traveled to the mountains with Whitman in 1836. Whitman carried a letter east for Goodyear. Lovejoy and Whitman stayed only briefly at the fort, purchasing a few supplies and acquiring a new guide to accompany them to Taos. Lovejoy gave no details of life at the fort in his account.

The most distinguished visitor at the fort was likely Captain John C. Fremont in 1844. He was returning to the East from his 1843 expedition for the government to Oregon and California. He traveled up the Spanish Trail from southern Cahfornia, passing through Utah Valley, then turning eastward toward the Duchesne River, Lake Fork, and finally arriving at Fort Uinta on June 3. Guides from the fort helped Fremont's party to ford the Uinta River, swollen with the spring runoff. The group camped near the fort, which Fremont in his official report called a "motley garrison" of Canadian and Spanish trappers and hunters. He also saw several Indian women. Fremont purchased some sugar, coffee, dried meat, and a cow, that he and his men found a welcome change from their recent diet. He also added to his exploring party the services of Auguste Archambeau, a highly skilled guide, hunter, and mountain man. The Fremont party left Fort Uinta on June 5 and continued eastward on their journey to the States.

A few months later Fort Uinta met a violent end. Indian hostilities had increased as a result of the kidnapping of women and children for the slave trade and the killing of Indians by whites. The problem was worsened by the selling of whiskey to the native peoples. The Utes attacked the fort, killing the men there—five or six Spaniards and one American. Apparently the women were carried off, and Robidoux was not at the fort. Then the attackers burned the fort.

The days of the mountain man and the fur trade had been declining for several years by the time Fort Uinta came to an end as a business enterprise. Even if the Indians had not attacked, the fort's days were likely numbered as the times were changing. The era of the fur trade was passing into history.

Sources: William S. Wallace, "Antoine Robidoux" in LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, vol. 4 (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1966); John D. Barton, "Fort Robidoux" in Allan Kent Powell, ed., *Utah History Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994); Joseph Williams, *Tour to Oregon 1841-42: Narrative of a Tour from the State of Indiana to the Oregon Territory in the Years 1841-42* (New York, 1921); Rufus B. Sage, "His Letters and Papers" and "Scenes in the Rocky Mountains" in LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *The Far West and the Rockies*, vol. 5 (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1956); Myron Eells, *Marcus Whitman, Pathfinder and Patriot* (Seattle, 1909); Clifford M. Drury, *Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and the Opening of Old Oregon*, vol. 2 (Seattle, 1986); John C. Fremont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and to Oregon and Northern California in the Years 1843-44* (Washington, D.C., 1845).

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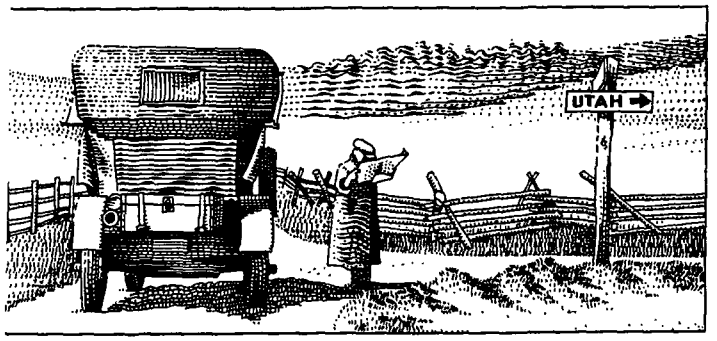

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Southern Utah's Boom and Bust Uranium Industry

The HISTORY OF MUCH OF THE AMERICAN WEST has been marked by boom and bust cycles. Perhaps the most famous example is the California gold rush, which brought tens of thousands of Forty-Niners to the Golden State, a tiny fraction of whom ever struck it rich. Southeastern Utah has experienced a number of boom and bust cycles with one of its most famous products—uranium.

Uranium ore was known to some of the earliest inhabitants of the region around Moab. Native Americans used the substance to create red and yellow paints for ceremonial decoration. In the 1870's prospectors mined the material and sent most of it to Germany and France where it was turned into industrial dyes for the ceramics industry. In 1898 Marie Curie discovered radium in uranium, and another market for Utah's ore emerged. When a process for separating radium from uranium ore was perfected in 1913, uranium mining boomed. Radium seemed to have no end of uses; it was promoted as a wonder drug and became an ingredient in bath salt, salves, and therapeutic muds. During World War I radium was used to illuminate watch faces, gunsights, and compasses.

While the war's disruption of international trade dampened the uranium boom, the need for vanadium, another component of uranium ore, helped pick up the slack. Vanadium was useful for increasing the strength of steel, which of course was in great demand for the war effort. The end of the war brought recession, however, and in 1923 an even greater blow struck Utah's uranium industry. Immense pitchblende deposits rich in radium were discovered in the Belgian Congo (present Zaire), and the market for Utah's radium dried up.

For a time, the demand for vanadium helped keep the boom alive in the 1920s. Then the discovery of more easily accessible deposits in Peru caused prices to plunge. Uranium mining continued at a lower level. Prospectors like Howard Balsley, who bought ore from many other small producers, in turn sold it for mineral pigments, ceramic colorant, and its vanadium content in the 1930s. World War II brought another great demand for vanadium, but in 1944 the government announced that it was overstocked and stopped purchasing ore for its vanadium content.

In 1945 another use for uranium ore would emerge. The successful completion of the Manhattan Project created a new and vastly more destructive class of weapons. Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union launched an unprecedented arms race with atomic bombs as the most prized (and feared) weapons in each nation's arsenal. The Atomic Energy Commission was initially convinced that the West could not supply the nation's uranium needs

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but exploratory surveys in the early 1950s changed their minds. In the summer of 1952 a geologist named Charles A. Steen found the massive Mi Vida deposit in the Big Indian District near Moab. The latest boom was on.

Geologists, prospectors, and mining engineers poured into Utah. Moab became their headquarters, and the town's population quintupled. Salt Lake City became the financial center for the boom, with issuance of penny uranium stocks and widespread speculation. Then in 1956, the AEC announced that its stocks of uranium were plentiful. Like the radium and vanadium booms before it, the latest uranium boom was largely over. Uranium mining continued at a much more sedate pace, taking its place among other southeastern Utah industries.

Sources: *Grand Memories* (Grand County, Utah: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1972); Richard E. Westwood, "Howard W. Balsley, Dean of Uranium Miners and Civic Leader of Moab," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 59 (Fall 1991); Don Sorensen, "Wonder Mineral: Utah's Uranium," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 31 (Summer 1963).

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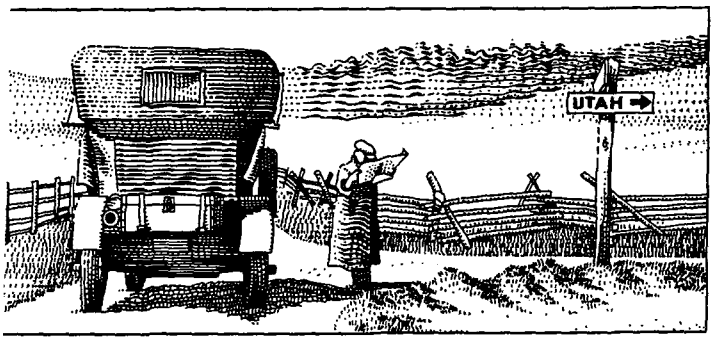

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Joseph E. Johnson and "Old Guardy"

JOSEPH ELLIS JOHNSON MUST HAVE BEEN born with printing ink in his veins or he would not have started so many newspapers in so many places. He was an editor or owner of no less than five newspapers in Iowa and Nebraska. Once he had relocated in Utah County, he began to publish the *Farmer's Oracle*. After moving to Utah's Dixie he founded and operated newspapers in St. George and Silver Reef. Johnson's career began when he purchased a printing press in 1852 with his brother-in-law, Almon Babbitt. At Kanesville, Iowa (later called Council Bluffs), he managed the *Weekly Western Bugle* and as editor renamed it the *Council Bluffs Bugle*. When the *Frontier Guardian*, the Mormon newspaper run by Orson Hyde, ceased operation, Johnson purchased "Old Guardy," the printing press, and it remained with him in all his journalistic ventures. Over the next few years he fathered the *Omaha Arrow*, the first newspaper in Nebraska Territory, the *Crescent City Oracle*, and the *Council Bluffs Press*. He became well known for his gleeful personality and flowery writing style. After a brief sojourn to the Colorado mines, where he established not a newspaper but a store, he returned to a small village named Wood River where he started the *Huntsman's Echo* in 1860, filling it with local, immigration, and mining news.

In August 1861 Johnson prepared to move to Utah. "Old Guardy," the type, and other materials were freighted west at great expense. In southern Utah County he built a 20-room "mansion" of adobe that he called Spring Lake Villa. One room was reserved for the printing press, and once again Johnson began publishing. The year was 1863. There were few newspapers in Utah Territory. The *Deseret News* was widely circulated but had a religious emphasis. The coming of the U.S. Army to the territory in 1858 had led to the establishment of the *Valley Tan*, an anti-Mormon newspaper mainly for soldiers. The *Mountaineer* emerged in an attempt to balance the negativism of the *Valley Tan*. Both papers were short-lived. The *Deseret News* again had a monopoly. But Johnson could not get journalism out of his system. In May 1863 his initial issue of the *Farmer's Oracle* appeared as the first newspaper published outside of the capital city.

The 8-page, 8 by 11 inch paper came out (when all went well) twice a month. Subscriptions sold for two dollars annually, payable in wheat if cash was unavailable. Newsprint was difficult to obtain and the homemade sheets were of inferior quality, with colors ranging from a sick-looking brown to faded blue, pink, and various off-whites. The articles Johnson published were geared to an agrarian population. He was an avid, well informed, and expert horticulturist and filled his paper with practical notes on growing vegetables, fruits, flowers, and trees, as well as livestock raising. A few national and local news items, exchanges with other newspapers, household hints, cures, and philosophy were included, but the paper catered to those who made their living on the

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land. Johnson's editorials were flowery, enthusiastic, stimulating, pointed, and indicative of his flamboyant personality and a determination to have his paper succeed. But most farmers could not afford a subscription, and the *Farmer's Oracle* had a tough time staying in print. He would extend credit until harvest time but often did not receive payment. He begged people to keep their accounts current, but few could or did. In September 1864, after a year and a half of bare survival, Johnson gave "Old Guardy" another rest. He hoped to resurrect the paper if enough subscribers would pay cash in advance. Fortunately for Johnson's family, their farm was doing well and lack of support for the newspaper did not bring them destitution.

Not one to stagnate, Johnson became interested in the semitropical plants that could be grown in southern Utah. Moreover, warm winters appealed to him with his pulmonary and bronchial problems. In 1865 he moved to St. George, taking "Old Guardy" with him, of course. By 1868 he had concluded that Dixie could use a newspaper, especially one with a horticultural emphasis. Again Johnson combined his two loves and dove into journalism. With *Our Dixie Times* he once again had the distinction of printing the only Utah newspaper outside of Salt Lake City. The first 4-page issue appeared in January 1868 on homemade paper. Each issue was 25 cents; subscriptions were five dollars a year. Besides horticultural items, the paper contained a great deal of advertising, particularly of Johnson's various services. He fully realized he was going into a risky business and almost immediately felt the scarcity of paper. Problems with ink also plagued him, and the paper was issued irregularly. Then his expert assistant S. A. Kenner left him to make a living in the north. He tried to continue the newspaper with the help of three of his children. By May, Johnson had changed the name to the *Rio Virgin Times*, then again to *Rio Virgen Times*. The populace, struggling for survival, seemed indifferent. Troubles with the type and printing machinery made some issues difficult to read. The paper languished and died.

Nine months elapsed before Johnson tried another newspaper—the *Utah Pomologist*, first issued in April 1870. He wrote primarily about fruits and flowers. By January 1872 the publication had increased in size and scope, and he renamed it the *Utah Pomologist and Gardener*. When Silver Reef began to boom as a mining town, Johnson was able to pick up additional advertising there. To accommodate this town, he changed the title to the *Utah Pomologist and Silver Reef Echo* in 1877. Two-thirds of the paper was filled with advertisements, most for Silver Reef businesses. The paper lost its appeal to St. George residents, and Johnson renamed it the *Silver Reef Echo*. He soon sold the paper and finally abandoned journalism. In 1882 Johnson died on his way to Mexico where he had planned to make his new home. Though not Utah's most famous or prosperous journalist, he was certainly one of the most colorful, prolific, and persistent.

Sources: Rufus David Johnson, *JEJ. Trail to Sundown; Joseph Ellis Johnson, Pioneer* (n.p., 1961); J. Cecil Alter, *Early Utah Journalism* (Salt Lake City, 1938); Andrew Karl Larson, *I Was Called to Dixie* (St. George, 1961); Chad Flake, "History of Newspaper Publishing in Utah" in *Utah's Newspapers—Traces of Her Past*, ed. Robert P. Holley (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, Marriott Library, 1984).

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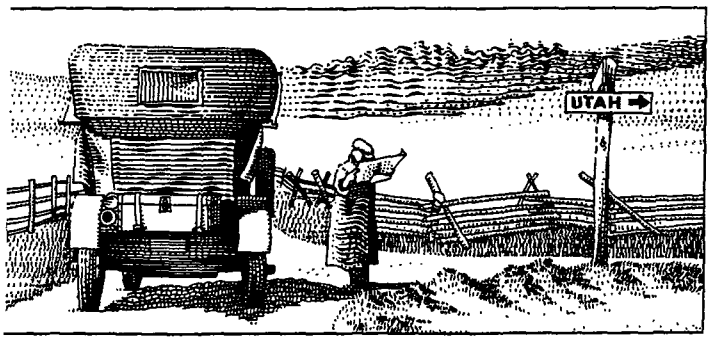

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The Salt Lake Cutoff and the California Trail

IN THE SUMMER OF 1848 SAMUEL J. HENSLEY made a discovery that greatly affected Utah history: a route from Salt Lake City to the California Trail near the City of Rocks in Idaho that would be followed by thousands of argonauts on their way to California. These gold seekers passing through Utah interacted with the local residents, ending their isolation and bringing changes to the economic and social scene. This gold corridor, which passed through Salt Lake, Davis, Weber and Box Elder counties was a major road for several years and became known as the Salt Lake Cutoff.

Hensley had gone to California in 1843 but went east to testify at the court-martial of John C. Fremont. Returning to California in 1848, Hensley and the 10 men with him attempted to cross the Salt Lake Desert by way of the Hastings Cutoff. They became mired in mud caused by heavy rain and had to backtrack to Salt Lake City. After replenishing their supplies, Hensley headed north to intersect the California Trail. By so doing, he pioneered a new route that would allow travelers to reach California by going through Salt Lake City where they could reprovision, rest their animals, rest, spend the winter if necessary, and perhaps satisfy their curiosity about the Mormons.

Other men also made important contributions to this route. After successfully reaching the California Trail, Hensley continued west. On August 27, 1848, on the Humboldt River in Nevada, the Hensley group met some Mormon Battalion veterans under Samuel Thompson who were making their way to Utah to join their families and church. The veterans had planned to go by way of Fort Hall, but from Hensley they learned of the shorter route north of the Great Salt Lake that would save several days of travel time. Because Thompson's group had wagons, they would become the ones responsible for changing Hensley's pack trail into a wagon road. Bidding Hensley farewell, Thompson's group moved eastward on the California Trail to the City of the Rocks, a major landmark on the trail. Following Hensley's directions, they found on September 15 the junction to the new road near the rock formation called the Twin Sisters. There the Salt Lake Cutoff diverged from the California Trail. The company traveled east, then southeast into northern Utah and across Deep Creek near Snowville and the Hansel Mountains (commonly thought to be a corruption of Hensley). Just as Hensley had told them, there was plenty of water and grass on the route. With difficulty they crossed the Malad River. The Bear River, the next major landmark, was much easier to ford. South from there they found luxuriant grass for the animals. With the Wasatch Mountains on the east and the Great Salt Lake to the west, the wagons and men passed out of Box Elder County.

On September 25 they reached James Brown's tiny village of Ogden, formerly Miles Goodyear's fort, the northernmost settlement in Utah at the time. The few residents charged the

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veterans a high price for cheese. The practice of charging high prices for supplies to users of the cutoff would become a hallmark of the trail. Here the group split, some proceeding directly to Salt Lake City, the others staying another day to mend broken gear. The party next camped with Hector C. Haight who was herding cattle near present Farmington. The trail ended in Salt Lake City. The Thompson company had blazed a wagon road that would become extremely important during the next few years. A second group of Mormon Battalion veterans who followed the Salt Lake Cutoff arrived in Salt Lake City some three weeks later. This was the Ebenezer Brown party which included women and children and families from the ship *Brooklyn* that had carried Mormons to California in 1846. This second wagon train cut the trail more clearly into northern Utah's soil.

By mid-June of 1849 the first gold rushers began to arrive in Salt Lake City. Eager as they were to reach the land of golden dreams as fast as possible, many needed to stop briefly in the city for supplies, for repairs, and to rest animals. The forty-niners brought money and goods to the impoverished valley residents. Utahns could charge and receive nearly any price they asked for supplies and services. Many who detoured from the California Trail to Salt Lake City for supplies used the Salt Lake Cutoff to rejoin the California Trail. Word had spread quickly that it was a good road with grass and water at desirable intervals. The bad reputation of the Hastings Cutoff across the Salt Desert kept most from taking that route. Gold seekers who arrived late in the season and did not want to risk the snow in the Sierra Nevada took the southern route through Provo and down the Spanish Trail, but a majority took the Salt Lake Cutoff. Some travelers employed local guides. For example, James C. Sly, who was with the Mormon Battalion group that followed Hensley's directions in the fall of 1848, led the William G. Johnston party on the Salt Lake Cutoff in 1849. Another group led by William Kelly was close on their heels.

During the early 1850s, when gold fever was still virulent, the Salt Lake Cutoff saw heavy traffic as the major road west from Salt Lake City. An estimated 10,000 to 15,000 California-bound immigrants a year passed through Salt Lake City in 1849 and 1850, and large numbers also journeyed through Utah in 1851-52. Most of them likely took the Salt Lake Cutoff to the California Trail. These thousands of travelers boosted Utah's economy enormously. As towns sprang up along the agriculturally desirable sections of the road, settlers and immigrants had many occasions for interaction while bartering for farm produce, animals, or repairs and at river crossings, especially where the settlers established ferries. Sometimes immigrants complained of the high prices in the territory, but at least the goods and services were available, making their trip more pleasant. The Salt Lake Cutoff was a boon to traveler and settler alike.

Sources: J. Roderic Korns and Dale L. Morgan, *West from Fort Bridger*, revised and edited by Will Bagley and Harold Schindler (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1994); Will Bagley, *S. J. Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff* (Sait Lake City: Oregon-California Trails Association, Utah Crossroads Chapter, 1992); Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958).

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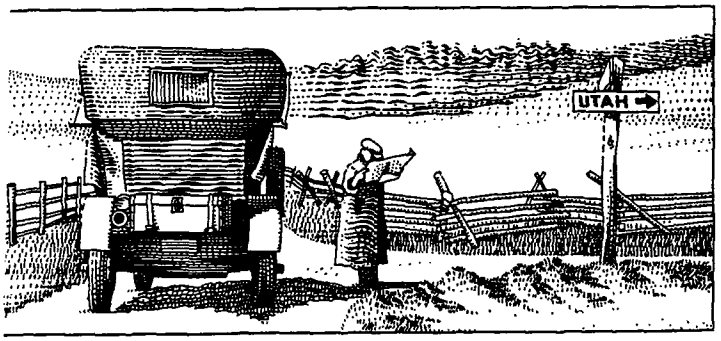

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The Fall of Leonidas Skliris, "Czar of the Greeks"

THE LURE OF JOBS IN THE AMERICAN WEST drew thousands of immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Many came from Greece, convinced by the promises of Leonidas G. Skliris, a Salt Lake City-based labor agent who became known as "the Czar of the Greeks." The Greeks that settled in western cities formed ethnic enclaves, establishing Greek language newspapers and opening stores. The heart of "Greek Town" was the coffeehouse where the overwhelmingly male immigrant population socialized. Skliris, a native of Sparta, arrived in Salt Lake City in 1897, and set up his labor agency headquarters at 507 West 200 South, near the railroad yards in the heart of "Greek Town." He established branch offices in Greek communities across the country to recruit labor for industries throughout the West. He became the labor agent for the Carbon County coal mines, Utah Copper, and the Western Pacific and Denver and Rio Grande Western railroads. In the early 1900s Skliris dispatched agents to Greece, but soon discovered that advertisements in Greek newspapers in the U.S. were equally effective. Immigrants newly arrived in America sought him out. Eventually, his network became so well established that he could supply most companies' labor needs with a few well-placed telephone calls.

Labor recruiting proved lucrative. Adapting the Old World patronage system, the agent or *padrone* (from the Italian for "patron") charged a fee, usually around $20, for finding a job for an individual. He also received a monthly fee, around $1 or $2, for each man that he supplied to his clients, who often deducted the fee from the employee' monthly paychecks. Skliris's agency also formed partnerships with company stores, which workers were required to patronize, and had close ties with steamship agents. These income sources allowed him to entertain lavishly in his rooms at the opulent new Hotel Utah.

Skliris's clients used his services to solve their labor problems. The agency brought Greeks to Utah in 1903 to break a coal strike by a largely Italian work force. Skliris played adroitly on ethnic differences, bringing mainland Greeks to replace workers from the island of Crete during the 1912 Bingham strike. By then, however, resentment of his exploitative tactics had become widespread.

The largest single group of workers in the Utah Copper's Bingham mines in 1912 were from Crete. They were joined by large number of Italians, Austrians, Japanese, Finns, and English, along with Bulgarians, Swedes, Irish, and German. The ethnically mixed workforce was largely the result of past labor disputes; when the mostly Italian workforce struck in 1903-4, for instance, they were replaced by Greek strike-breakers. Each ethnic group had its own network of stores and businesses. Fights and even shootings between and within various ethnic groups were

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not uncommon. Old Country feuds were sometimes renewed and strengthened in the pressure cooker of the mining town.

By 1912 many Greeks were heartily sick of the predations of labor agent Leonidas Skliris, who had recruited most of them in return for a variety of kickback schemes. Union organizers, especially those from the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) found fertile ground for new members at Bingham in the summer of 1912, but they discovered that the Greeks had an agenda that did not necessarily mesh with the union's goals. The WFM's local president, Charles W. Moyer, suggested that workers delay a strike while the union attempted to gain recognition from the company and a 50 cent an hour wage increase across the board. At a mass meeting on September 17 Moyer counseled patience, but the approximately 1,000 miners in attendance demanded a strike. The militance of the strikers badly frightened the surrounding community. Newspapers reported that the "foreigners" were heavily armed and had coerced and threatened workers who refused to honor the picket lines. By the time 25 deputy sheriffs arrived in Bingham, "heavily armed and ready for any emergency," hundreds of armed strikers had taken to the hills above the mines and staked out defensive positions.

As cooler heads began to prevail, representatives of the Greeks met with Governor William Spry and demanded Skliris's removal. Although the company and Skliris steadfastly denied the miners' charges, the labor agent resigned within a week. Ultimately, he left Utah and reportedly moved to Mexico where he became part owner of a mine. The Greeks, jubilant over their victory, nevertheless continued the strike for better wages. The company was steadily infiltrating strikebreakers into town, including many mainland Greeks recruited by Skliris. Clashes in October between strikers, strikebreakers, guards, and police led to gunfire; two miners eventually died, and many more were arrested. On October 31 Daniel C. Jackling announced a 25-cent pay raise, claiming that it had been planned before the strike. The stubborn miners continued to hold out, but theirs was a losing cause. After six weeks of hardship, the strike gradually died; the mines reopened with large numbers of Mexican laborers. The WFM remained unrecognized, and no one was ever charged in the miners' deaths.

Sources: Allan Kent Powell, "A History of Labor Union Activity in the Eastern Utah Coal Fields: 1900-1934" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1976); Helen Zeese Papanikolas, "Toil and Rage in a New Land: The Greek Immigrants in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 38 (Spring 1970).

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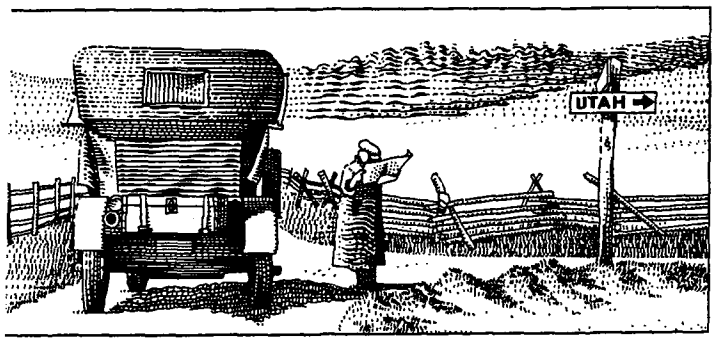

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Iron Mission Remains Part of Utah's Industrial Heritage

IN 1949 BRIGHAM YOUNG COMMISSIONED the Southern Exploring Company, captained by Parley P. Pratt, to investigate the region south of Salt Lake City and give an account of its resources, topography, and favorable locations for settlement. Among the discoveries of the party was "a hill of the richest iron ore" later named Iron Mountain, near present day Cedar City. In response to this report, and as part of his efforts to create an economically self-sufficient empire, Young called a group of "iron missionaries" to move south and develop that industry in July 1850.

The original group of 167 persons first settled in Parowan and used that town as a base from which to establish the necessary facilities to produce iron. In November 1851, 35 men skilled in mining and manufacturing began laying out the village of Cedar City 20 miles south of Parowan. They erected a fort, dug a canal, planted crops, constructed roads to coal deposits, and located materials to build a blast furnace. By September of the following year the industrious colonizers had produced their first iron—enough to cast a pair of andirons (commonly known as "dog irons") and to make sufficient nails to shoe a horse.

This early success, though small, bolstered Young's confidence in the effort and prompted him to reinforce the Iron Mission with manpower and capital. The Deseret Iron Company was subsequently organized in 1852 and was largely funded by wealthy European church members who were solicited to buy stock. In addition, skilled iron workers, coal miners, and blacksmiths were recruited in Britain and Sweden from among converts to Mormonism and asked to immigrate to "Zion" and apply their expertise in the Iron Mission.

Throughout the winter of 1852-53 workers busily constructed an air furnace and a frame casting house and gathered large quantities of pine and charcoal to bum. In March 1853 the iron missionaries' efforts were rewarded with 2,500 pounds of iron. The vast amounts of charcoal required to produce the iron proved expensive, however, and the company turned to coal mining as a solution. James A. Little and Philip K. Smith, after exploring for several days, found a rich vein of coal that extended for several miles. With this fuel source readily available, future prospects for the Iron Mission looked bright.

Nevertheless, several unmanageable events soon dimmed the optimistic outlook. In July 1853 iron operations were suspended while colonists made preparations to defend themselves against Indian attacks due to the outbreak of the Walker War. Then, in September, a devastating flood roared down Coal Creek scattering huge boulders in its path and destroying bridges and dams. Water at the iron works site rose to a depth of three feet and large amounts of charcoal and lumber were carried downstream.

(more)

Undaunted, workers rebuilt and by 1855 had completed a 21-foot square furnace and four large coke ovens. They produced up to 1,700 pounds of iron in a single day. Regardless, difficulties again overshadowed these accomplishments. Cold weather in the winter of 1855-56 hampered progress, and in 1857 iron missionaries were again forced to suspend operations due to the impending "Utah War." More important in the long run, however, the earnest colonists lacked the appropriate resources and technology for long-term success. Researchers in the 1980s who examined bricks from the furnace lining determined that they could not withstand the high temperatures generated by the blast furnace. Bricks uncovered at the site showed evidence of melting and spalling, serious problems that would have made sustained iron-making difficult if not impossible.

In 1858 two unsuccessful furnace blastings finally signaled an end to the Iron Mission and the dissolution of the Deseret Iron Company. After nearly ten years of labor and the expenditure of $150,000 only a few andirons, kitchen utensils, flat irons, wagon wheels, and machine castings existed to testify of the missionaries' valiant struggle to produce iron in Utah.

Sources: Morris A. Shirts and William T. Parry, "The Demise of the Deseret Iron Company: Failure of the Brick Furnace Lining Technology," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 56 (Winter 1988); Leonard J. Arrington, "Iron Manufacturing in Southern Utah in the Early 1880's: The Iron Manufacturing Company of Utah," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 25 (September 1951); Milton R. Hunter, *Brigham Young the Colonizer* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1973).

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