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Biographical Sketch

of

James Chipman

by Himself

Pioneer Year 1847

Born: 9 Apr 1839, Carrol County, Missouri

Died: 13 Oct 1922, Salt Lake City, Utah

Buried: American Fork, Utah

Was born in Carrol County, Mo., April 9, 1839, was the son of Stephen and Amanda Washburn Chipman, moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa, from there to Nauvoo and from Nauvoo to Salt Lake, arriving in Salt Lake September 24, 1847 – living in what was called Old Fort that winter. Moved to Mill Creek, about seven miles south, in the Spring. Here we planted crops and raised some grain and vegetable that year of '48. The black crickets came down from the mountains and did considerable damage that Fall. They laid their eggs, and were very particular where they laid them. They did not lay them in soft ground, but would deposit their eggs in hard ground (seemed to prefer the road). These crickets had a tail about an inch long which they would force down into the hard ground. In the spring of '49 the eggs hatched out by the millions and the crickets laid dormant until they were fairly well grown. Then it seemed that a command was given out among them when to start and they all started, as it seemed, at once and ate everything before them. They devoured most all of the wheat, and our people made water ditches and run the water into them to try and stop their course. They tried scattering straw and burning it, and all manner of devices were resorted to to check their ravenous rampant of the country. If they got in the water they would walk around and get out again.

When it looked like all our crops were going to be eaten up by the crickets, suddenly the seagulls came by the thousands and the people thought that the gulls would surely finish the balance of the grain. They were surprised and agreeably so. The crickets were eaten by the gulls, and as soon as they had their stomachs full they would disgorge and fill up again. This was a God-send to the people and were very welcome visitors.

Then the country was visited with grass hoppers. It was thought that the course of the grasshoppers could be changed but as soon as they were headed off they would drop down again and devour everything they could get on. They would then wait for a favorable wind that would seem to carry them in the direction they wanted to go. It appeared they had trained officers among them and the whole bunch would obey the command when it was given. We

were also pested with the locust and caterpillars, both of which were very destructive. It proved a struggle to get enough to live upon.

About that time there was a great immigration from the East to California to the new Gold District. There was an immigrant offered father a long, mane mare for twenty five pounds of grain. She was a little disfigured, but had good breeding. She was stolen from the yard one night. At the time of the move a man by the name of Maughn was driving the old mare in a team at American Fork. Father stopped him and told him he was driving his mare. Bishop Maughn said he bought the mare of an Indian in Skull Valley. The Indian had gone North and said father would never get there and that his claim on the mare was as good as father's. President Brigham young was coming to American Fork that night and they agreed to submit their case to him. His decision was, that father was to take the mare and keep her until the colt she was carrying was old enough to wean. The bishop then was to come and get the mare and father was to keep the colt. Bishop Maughn never did call for his mare. She had another colt after that when she was over twenty years old. This colt took the premium at the State Fair a number of years.

We moved to American Fork in 1851, settled about where Bishop Washburn Chipman now lives. It was a desolate place, mostly a wilderness. Indians were numerous. The bog wood wolf and coyotes were everywhere. They would make so much disturbance around the sheep and cattle that we could hardly sleep at night – not knowing what moment the Indians would make a raid on us. I used to trap the red fox and sell their skins for \$1.00 each. They would be worth today \$75.00 to \$100.00. These skins were sold to the immigrants as they came through going to California, but there was a massacre took place in the South end of Utah and quite a number of immigrants were killed and after that time the immigrants would not come by way of Salt Lake for fear the Mormons would kill them, but turned off at the Green River and went by Soda Springs and Bear Lake. Bishop Maughn and three other men and myself, as a boy, went up to near the end of Malad Valley to trade with some of the immigrants that were making their way to California. We traded, bought and sold stock all summer. One thing I well remember and

that was a barrel of Valley Tan Whiskey, the barrel was put in the shade close to the creek. We sold whiskey all summer, and the funny thing was that at the end of the season the barrel was as full as when bought. After Johnson's army came to Salt Lake in 1858 the immigrants mostly all came by Salt Lake.

N. C. Munn, Alva Green and myself rented the block where the City and County building now stands in Salt Lake. We traded with the immigrants, sold them hay and grain and a times the block would be covered with wagons and tents.

In 1857 President Brigham invited the people to go to Cotton Wood Canyon and celebrate the 24th of July. President Young called the people together, got up on one of the large granite rocks and was making a speech, and while doing so, a messenger came with a message to President Young which he read. It stated there was a large army on the road to Salt Lake to correct the practices of the Mormons. President Young said they never would get to Salt Lake Valley until they gave their consent. They got as far as Fort Bridger that winter. They were delayed while traveling up Hams Fork by losing their mules and provisions. These were burned up. They were not able to get further than Bridger. They ran short of salt and other things and supplies were sent out from Salt Lake.

In the Spring of 1868 there was a commission sent up from Los Angeles, California, to make arrangements for the army to come in. It was agreed they could come in if they would march straight through the city, not stopping until they were on the West Side of Jordan. This command they obeyed. They finally camped at what is now called Saratoga Springs. They moved on and finally made a permanent camping place at Old Camp Floyd, now known as Fairfield. This was a very rich army. All had plenty of money. They would buy everything the people had to sell. Before they came it was our only ambition to get enough to live upon. No one ever thought of getting a cent ahead. They found the army to be a great help to the people financially, and people began to accumulate means.

Along in the sixties I took a load of hay over to Dr. Dunnon's place, north of the point of the mountain, now a resort. After I got off

the wagon a man came and asked if he could ride with me. I asked him where he was going and he said he was not particular. He asked me where I was going. I told him to American Fork. He said he would go to American Fork also. Staying in American Fork some time he finally claimed to have had a revelation and was set apart to perform some kind of revelation. He got a man by the name of John Banks of Pleasant Grove and they started with their company and finally got quite a following. They located at Ogden where they established a considerable calling. They all lived together and their property was held in common. They finally got to quarreling and created such a disturbance that a body of men went up and killed some of them off, among whom was John Banks. This broke up the Meversites as they were called. I don't know what authority these men had for killing.

About that time it was advised that all the Latter Day Saints join the order of Enoch and live in common. Many people joined but only two from American Fork. Bishop Harrington seemed to doubt it being the proper thing to do.

Bishop Harrington was a little like me. He took counsel when it suited. Brigham Young was against Free Schools. Bishop Harrington started Free Schools in 1869 which was the first Free School in this Territory. At least it was started by his influence. He was trustee with W. W. Jacobs and John Dunn.

American Fork was first known by the name of Lake City, but afterward changed to American Fork. It was an attractive place on account of plenty of wood, fine water, with plenty of fish in the lake near by. We used to go down within a half mile of the lake, turn the water into the channel over night and next morning turn it back and gather in the fish which were left without water to cover them. At one particular time about twenty of us were down and had the water fixed so we could get the fish the next morning. Henry Boley, Stephen Mott, and Brother Henry worked out a plan to scare us. Mott was to go down and camp with us and tell us that a big Indian chief by the name of Squash was angry at us for catching so many fish and interfering with them coming up the creeks and that he was coming down some night and kill us all off. Mott's boy knew of the plan and

he was to camp with us this night and got the boys pretty well worked up. We got to bed and when everything was still Mott and Hunter came up through the bushes, fired off their guns and threw gravel on our beds. You never saw such a stampede. The boys did not stop for anything but broke and ran for home. This created a bad feeling in the town. Mott and Hindley got a good licking, Boley hid in the bushes, but Hunter was too big for us. No one dared tackle him.

In the early days there was quite a lot of uncalled for crime committed. At one time there was a man by the name of Lance accused of insulting a girl. He was taken to Lehi for safe keeping, but during the night someone broke in while he was sleeping and split his head open with an ax. There was many crimes committed in the different settlements. American Fork was about as clean as any town I knew of. Bishop Harrington was a great believer in law and order. I have been thankful I was not old enough to have been numbered with those you might call of the Frontier Life. In the 60s the people lived on their farms, but word came for everybody to move into forts. The boundary of the fort in American Fork was: From David Adams and Thomas Crooks, then east to Grever Robinson's and Bishop Harrington's and north to George Robinson's and John Binn's; then northwest to William Kelley's. The grain and hay were all stacked outside of the Fort. The cattle were on the inside. John Mercer had charge of the cow herd, while I was first lieutenant. After the stock and cow herd were moved back outside of the wall and orchards in front.

My father let a man, by the name of Middleton, use the team here in the winter for exercise. Middleton was on his way to Camp Floyd with a load of hay when the horses became frightened and ran into the Jordan river and were both drowned. The people were ordered to build a wall from eight to ten feet high, everyone was to build this wall the width of his own lot. We finished ours but some did not do much and the wall never was completed. By this time the Indian trouble began to drift further to the southern settlements and new comers located on their farms and property as they chose.

He died in Salt Lake City October 13, 1922, and was buried in American Fork.