

Day By Day With the Utah Pioneers

1847

By ANDREW JENSON, Assistant L. D. S. Church Historian

SUNDAY, MAY 30

The morning was cool and pleasant in the Pioneer camp, although there was some appearance of rain. The day had been set apart by the Pioneers as a day of fasting and prayer.

About 8:30 a. m. most of the brethren retired to a green, dry spot a short distance south of the camp, where they held a prayer meeting. As many of the brethren as chose to do so expressed their feelings in prayer, praise and confession of sins. Bishop Tarlton Lewis took the lead of the meeting, which was continued until 10:10 a. m., and then dismissed in order to give the brethren time to gather up the cattle preparatory for the sacrament meeting, which had been appointed.

When the cattle had all been attended to, the brethren assembled again at 11 a. m. for prayer and sacrament.

At 12:30 p. m. the Twelve and some others went onto the bluffs and, selecting a small, circular, level spot, surrounded by bluffs and out of sight, they formed a circle and offered up prayers to God for themselves, the Pioneer camp and all pertaining to it, the brethren in the Mormon battalion, their own families and all the Saints. The members of the council of Twelve present on this occasion were Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, Orson Pratt, George A. Smith, Wilford Woodruff, Amasa M. Lyman and Ezra T. Benson. The other brethren present were Phineas H. Young, John Pack, Charles Shumway, Shadrach Roundy, Albert P. Rockwood, Erastus Snow, William Clayton, Albert Carington and Porter Rockwell.

When the brethren started for the bluffs there was a heavy cloud in the southwest and rain might come at any minute. But the brethren believed it would not rain until they had finished their prayers: Yet, if it should, they chose rather to get a wetting than be denied the privilege of meeting together. The rain kept off remarkably well until the brethren got through and changed their clothing, but soon after that it began to rain, and after they had returned to camp considerable rain descended, accompanied by strong wind.

Elder Clayton remarked that he had never noticed the brethren so still and sober on a Sunday before since they started on their westward journey. There was no jesting, or laughing, or nonsense; all appeared to be solemn and to remember the covenants made by them the day be-

fore, which made things look far more pleasant than previously had been the case. The brethren then returned to their wagons and partook of some refreshments, having eaten nothing that day up to that time.

President Young, Heber C. Kimball, Lorenzo D. Young and Phineas H. Young spent most of the afternoon in Elder Kimball's wagon, on which occasion the minutes of President Young's discourse of the day before were read.

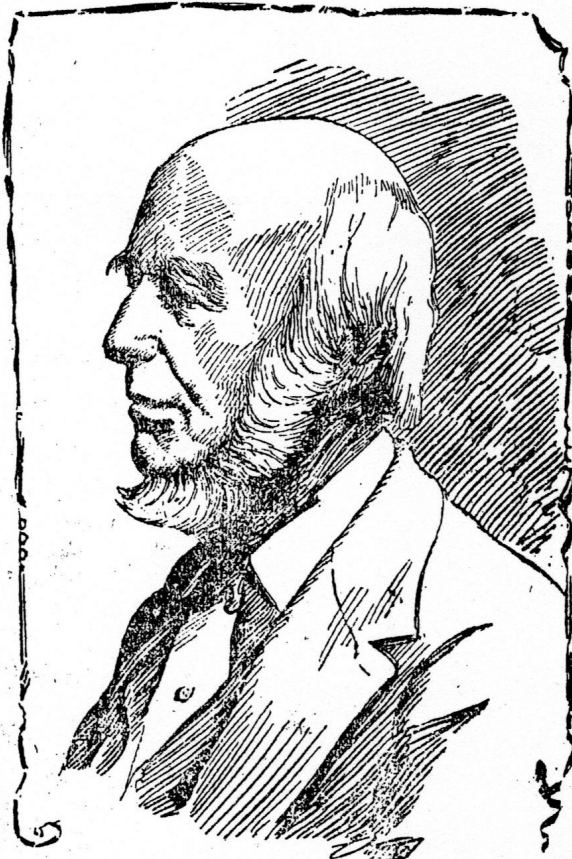
The weather was more pleasant toward evening, but still slight showers fell occasionally.

About 5 p. m. President Young, Heber C. Kimball, Ezra T. Benson, Wilford Woodruff and others walked out together to the bluffs, taking their fieldglasses with them, and ascended the highest point within their reach, which was about three miles north-

west of the camp, where, near the time of the setting of the sun, they viewed the surrounding country. Chimney rock, though nearly 40 miles distant, was still visible down the river, and the towering heights of the long range of the Black Hills west of Laramie were also plainly seen. To the north and northwest, the country appeared little else than sandhills as far as the eye could reach.

After gratifying their eyes, President Young proposed prayers upon this, the highest ground they had stood upon. After bowing before the Lord, the brethren descended and returned to camp at dark, weary in body, and retired to rest satisfied with the proceedings of the day.

Elder Clayton remarks that he was invited to accompany the brethren in the evening to the bluffs, but could not accept the invitation, he being so



CHARLES A. HARPER

Born January 27, 1817, in Upper Providence, Pa.; died April 24, 1900, in Cottonwood.

seriously afflicted with cramps that he could scarcely walk. Ellen Sanders, wife of Heber C. Kimball, prepared a warm drink for him, after which he retired to his wagon early, feeling better.

It may here be stated that while the three pioneer women in the camp were not required to stand guard, herd cattle or fight Indians, they were, nevertheless, very useful around the camp; they not only waited upon their respective husbands and families, but at times, when necessity required, they also waited upon the other brethren who happened to be sick, and otherwise contributed their part toward making the journey pleasant for all.

Orson Pratt writes that as he was retiring to rest at night a small shower of rain came up from the west while the moon beamed in brightness in the east, being about half an hour above the horizon, and by the refraction of its mild rays through the falling drops it produced a beautiful lunar rainbow in the west which was only a little inferior in brightness to a solar rainbow.

Charles A. Harper, one of the pioneers, was still alive in 1897. His home was near Holladay, Big Cottonwood, where he had lived for many years. Mr. Harper made a pleasant call at The Tribune office, and, though in his eightieth year, was hale and hearty. Mr. Harper remembered many details of the great trip perfectly, and is an entertaining man in his recitals of the incident of the journey. He was born in Upper Providence, Montgomery county, Pennsylvania, January 27, 1817. By trade he was a carriage maker, and in this work he was a handy member of the band. From the Platte crossing he drove the cannon wagon westward. He said there seemed to be some difference of opinion as to where the pioneers camped in the valley. According to his statement, the company he was in arrived on July 22, and camp was made on the bank of Mill creek. On the 23, they moved northeast to the block afterward known as Emigrant square, in the Eighth ward, and camped there until August 2. Mr. Harper said that Salt Lake valley at that time was a most desolate country, with only a patch of green here and there along the banks of the creeks, and the prospect was not inviting.

In August, Mr. Harper returned to Winter Quarters, but came back next year (1848) with his family. He died at his Cottonwood home, April 24, 1900.