

LDSWorld-Gems

David Crockett has written a daily or weekly "150 Years Ago" article since October, 1995. He has compiled the 1845-1847 period in three books. **Autographed** copies can be ordered from the author. Click [here](#) to find out more.

Sunday August 6 - Saturday, August 12, 1848
By **David R. Crockett** (crockett@ldsworld.com)

Great Salt Lake City, Utah:

On Tuesday, the leaders in the Valley wrote a letter to Brigham Young. It included: "There are 450 buildings in the Fort, besides quite a number of temporary farm buildings, three saw mills in operation, and one partly finished, one temporary grist mill, and an excellent one nearly finished by Brother Neff. Brother Leffingwell put up a threshing machine and fanning mill on City Creek, propelled by water; it will thresh and clean in good order two hundred bushels per day. Our population is not far from 1,800, enjoying excellent health. . . . Our wheat harvest is over, the grain is splendid and clean, but being mostly in shock and stack, we cannot state the number of bushels; however, we are all agreed that the wheat crop has done wonderfully well, considering all the circumstances, and that we can raise more and better wheat to the acre in this valley than in any place any of us ever saw; and the same with all other grains, vegetables, etc., that we have tried."

On Thursday a harvest celebration feast was held under a bowery in the center of the fort. This was the first "Thanksgiving" celebrated by the Saints in the Valley. Every family in the city was invited. A liberty pole was raised with a white flag and a cannon fired. Elders Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor addressed the large gathering. Elder Taylor offered a prayer of Thanksgiving. One of the Saints recorded: "A splendid dinner was spread under the bowery prepared for the occasion and several hundred sat down to rich repast to which all contributed."

Parley P. Pratt wrote: "We partook freely of a rich variety of bread, beef, butter, cheese, cakes, pastry, green corn, melons, and almost every variety of vegetable. Large sheaves of wheat, rye, barley, oats and other productions were hoisted on poles for public exhibition, and there was prayer and thanksgiving, congratulations, songs, speeches, music, dancing, smiling faces and merry hearts. In short, it was a great day with the people of these valleys, and long to be remembered by those who had suffered and waited anxiously for the results of a first effort to redeem the interior deserts of America, and to make her hitherto unknown solitudes 'blossom as the rose.'"

Near the Mormon Ferry, Wyoming:

Part of the 1848 pioneer camp traveled on the Sabbath but ran into difficulty. The road was poor and wagons started to break down. Brother Major's child fell out of a wagon and his leg was run over, but not broken. The feed they found was poor. Thomas Bullock commented: "So much for traveling on the Sabbath day, to which I am opposed."

On Monday wagons were crossed over the Platte River by fording the river and doubling the teams. After traveling a mile on the north side, they observed a forest fire on a mountain across the river. Brother

forming a dense White & Black Cloud, interspersed with livid glare, refracted from the fire. It was set on fire [in] part by the Indians & [in] part by our brethren who had been killing Game on the Mountain. This accounts for the hazy atmosphere of the past week." The following day, it could still be seen. The fire has travelled to this side of the Mountain, the flame & livid glare contrast greatly with the dull heavy smoke; a fine sight in the night."

During the week many of the cattle would drink very poor water in poison springs and several were lost. Others became sick but later recovered.

On Friday they reached Independence Rock. Many of the pioneers climbed the massive rock. Isaac Morley and Thomas Bullock gathered gooseberries that were growing near the top. On Saturday they continued their journey along the Sweetwater and passed around Devil's Gate, where the river flows through cliffs about 400 feet high. Hosea Stout recorded: "The Sweet Water Valley is now a most beautiful looking meadow and excellent grazing place and camps are now to be seen all along as we travel."

Twelve-year-old Rachel Simmons later recalled: "We heard so much of Independence Rock long before we got there. They said we should have a dance on top of it, as we had many a dance while on the plains. We thought it would be so nice, but when we got there, the company was so small it was given up. We nooned at this place, but Father stayed long enough for us children to go all over it. I went with the boys and with Catherine. It is an immense rock with holes and crevices where the water is dripping cool and sparkling. We saw a great many names of persons that had been cut in the rock, but we were so disappointed in not having a dance. Our company was so small, and we had not a note of music or a musician."

Young Rachel feared the wolves that came around during the night: "The wolves were as thick as sheep. It seemed as though they had gathered for miles around. There wasn't a wink of sleep that night for any of us. I was staying with Aunt Catherine that night for company as Uncle Sammy was out on guard with the rest of the men to keep the wolves from attacking the animals or stampeding them. They were so bold they would come right into camp and some of them would put their feet on the wagon tongues and sniff in at the end of the wagon."

Willard Richards company on the Platte River, Nebraska:

About three hundred miles to the east, the Willard Richards company met 2,000 Sioux Indians. Elder Richards made a short speech to them and they traded meal and clothing for buffalo robes and buckskins. It was a very peaceful meeting.

Lake Erie:

Wilford Woodruff and his family continued their journey on a steamer toward Buffalo, New York. Their young son, Wilford became very ill, but received a blessing and started to recover. They arrived at Buffalo on Monday, boarded a boat, and traveled up the Erie Canal. They arrived in Albany, New York on Friday. Next, they boarded a train for Boston and arrived there in eleven hours. They found a room at the Western Exchange Hotel. Elder Woodruff walked over to Cambridge and found Elders Nathaniel H. Felt and Lewis Robins. Elder Woodruff wrote: "I was truly glad to meet with them all, & to get to the end of my journey which had been a long & tedious one with my family of 2,595 miles journey from Council Bluff to Boston by land & waggons, rivers, lakes, canals, rail roads, etc."

Sources:

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