

THE MORMON BATTALION

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The Mormon Battalion came into being as a result of the overland migration of the Saints, a direct outcome of the mission of Elder Jessie C. Little of Washington.

That they could be of service to the government in carrying freight around the Horn or in the event of President Polk's recommendation to build forts on the route to Oregon becoming a law, had been mentioned by the council of the church in their circular issued when the decision was made to leave for the west. This work they could do as cheaply as anyone, and the compensation would make possible the migration for many who would otherwise be unable to go.¹ Brigham Young, writing to Little, said: "If our government shall offer any facilities for emigrating to the Western coast, embrace those facilities, if possible, as a wise and faithful man."²

Little had secured letters of introduction to several prominent men in Washington through Colonel Thomas Kane, a former friend of the Mormons, and with their aid was admitted to audience with the President. John Steel, Governor of New Hampshire and an old-time friend of Mr. Little, wrote a letter of introduction for the Elder stating that he understood that he was in Washington to procure any freight the government might wish to send to Oregon, in order that the expense of chartering vessels to take him and his followers to California where they intended to go to settle, might be lessened.³

In a petition to the President, Elder Little had told of the many thousands of the Saints, from the British Isles and the Sandwich Islands, as well as from the United States, who were determined to gather in California as soon as possible. He stated that many were poor and unable to pay their passage either by sea or by land, and added;

If you will assist us at this crisis, I hereby pledge my honor, my life, my property and all I possess as the representative of this people, to stand ready at

1. *Times and Seasons*, Vol. VI, No. 21, 1096, (Jan. 20, 1846).

2. Stenhouse, T. B. H., *Rocky Mountain Saints*, 237. Letter of Brigham Young to Elder Little, dated Temple of God, Nauvoo. January 20, 1846.

3. Roberts, B. H., *The Mormon Battalion*, 6. Little's Report to Brigham Young.

your call, and that the whole body of the people will act as one man in the land to which we are going, and should our territory be invaded we hold ourselves ready to enter the field of battle, and then like our patriot fathers—make the battlefield our grave or gain our liberty.⁴

The President replied that he had no prejudice against the Saints, that he had confidence in the Mormons as true American citizens, and was willing to do them all the good in his power.⁵

The United States had for some time felt that California was a most desirable province, not likely to remain long under Mexican control, and that the rapid increase of American population would bring about the desired result, unless it were prevented by European interference, (England's desire for the territory was well known) although it was hoped that acquisition could be accomplished by purchase rather than by filibustering.⁶

Trouble had been brewing with Mexico since the independence of Texas had been secured in 1836 by the American colonists there, the Mexicans feeling that independence was but a starting point for annexation to the United States. When the question of annexation did come up, Mexico declared officially that it would be forcibly resisted, and would be made a cause of war.⁷ In the spring of Forty-six, the trouble had come to a focus, and during April blood had been shed. On May thirteenth, President Polk proclaimed that a state of war existed between the two countries. The war once begun, the government did not hesitate to occupy California temporarily as a military measure.

As the news of the break with Mexico came while the negotiations with Elder Little were in progress, it is not surprising that the President thought to make use of these Mormons in a military way, making them a part of the "Army of the West." Little makes the claim that the President first

4. *Ibid.*, 10. It was the general belief at that time that the Mormons were moving west to throw off their allegiance to the United States, and but for the acquisition of the Mexican territory by the United States, the Mormons would have set up an independent government in the Rocky Mountains or have been forced to recognize Mexican authority. "With the latter Brigham would doubtless have made very short work." Stenhouse, 239. *op. cit.*

5. Stenhouse, 239. *op. cit.*

6. Article by H. J. Raymond, *American Review*, January, 1846, 99.

7. Bancroft, H. H. *History of California*, Vol. V, 192.

arranged to send one thousand Mormons by land, and an equal number by sea. His report said further :

I visited President Polk ; he informed me that we should be protected in California, and that five hundred or one thousand of our people should be taken into the service, officered by our own men ; said that I should have letters from him, and from the Secretary of the Navy to the squadron. I waived the President's proposal until evening, when I wrote a letter of acceptance.⁸

Bancroft reminds us that the details of this negotiation rest almost entirely on Mormon authority, and that possibly the elder in his enthusiasm, was disposed to exaggerate the President's promises ; while, on the other hand, Polk, after further consideration may have felt that he had promised too much.⁹ His diary, under date of June second (1846) says :

Colonel Kearny was also authorized to receive into service as volunteers a few hundred of the Mormons on their way to California, with a view to conciliate them, attach them to our country and prevent them from taking part against us.¹⁰

Polk's biographer says that Little offered to overtake the Mormons and muster five hundred of them into service, but Polk, fearing they would reach there before Kearny did, declined, as he did not want the province to be at the mercy of the Mormon soldiers. He did not want Kearny to enlist them until they arrived in California.¹¹

The Mormon churchmen believe that Thomas H. Benton, congressman from Missouri, did much to turn the President against them, arguing that they were disloyal, and urging that the President make a demand upon them to prove their good faith.¹² The President did ask the advice of Benton, who thought that the regiment should be sent, but felt they should go as emigrants and be discharged in California at the end of their service.¹³ An interview with Mrs. General John C. Fremont, daughter of Senator Benton, convinced Stenhouse that

8. Roberts, 10, from *Little's Report*, 23, op. cit.

9. Bancroft, *California*, Vol. V, 472, op. cit.

10. Quaipe, M. M., *Diary of President Polk*, Vol. I, 444. Apparently the Mormons were powerful enough at that time to oblige the President to take them into consideration.

Golder, F. A., *The March of the Mormon Battalion*, 32.

11. McCormac, E. J., *J. R. Polk, a Political Biography*, p. 422. Quoting Polk's *Diary*. Vol. I, p. 449-50.

12. Golder, p. 104, from *Journal History*, 1848, p. 67, op. cit. Tyler, Daniel, *The Mormon Battalion*, p. 117. Copying G. Q. Cannon.

13. McCormac, p. 422, op. cit.

the Senator had no evil intent toward the Mormons, in fact he found much to the contrary.¹⁴

Tullidge makes the charge that many saw in this an attempt to destroy or cripple the Mormons by taking from them their best men at a perilous time, though some thought the government designed only their good. The truth is, he says, that a few honorable men did so design, while others wished for their extinction, and some felt it a good way to wrest California from Mexico, not caring what became of the Mormons afterward.¹⁵

Stenhouse states that Brigham Young's charge that the government called the battalion, at the instigation of Benton, hoping they would rebel rather than leave their families in the Indian country without protection, thus giving the government a chance to break them up, is unjust. The story was made up, he thinks, to increase their endearment to the "Kingdom" and to cultivate their dislike for the republic, and has done more than any other thing in all Mormon history to shape the sentiment of the Mormon people against the government. Feeling this charge should be investigated, Stenhouse corresponded with governmental officials, and with Colonel Cooke who commanded their battalion, and has established beyond question, he thinks, that the government had no such thought in mind.¹⁶ The appearance of Captain Allen at the Mormon camps to enlist the men, was unheralded, and as Stenhouse writes, "much patriotism could not be expected in fleeing, homeless exiles," and Brigham and his followers might be forgiven for any thoughts they may have had at the time. But, in full possession of the facts, his after utterances have been most unjust to the government.¹⁷

Regardless of what may have been promised by the President, or what may have motivated those in power, the result was a call for a battalion of five hundred Mormon men, to be mustered into the service of the United States for twelve months, to march, via Santa Fe, to California, where they were to be discharged at the expiration of their term, retain-

14. Stenhouse, p. 249, op. cit.

15. Tullidge, E. W., *History of Salt Lake City*, p. 24.

16. Stenhouse, p. 241, op. cit.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 244. Bancroft also speaks of this, saying that so ingrafted in their minds was the thought of persecution, that many believed the call for the battalion an act of tyranny on the part of the United States. Bancroft, H. H., *History of Utah*, p. 242, (footnote).

ing the arms and accoutrements furnished to them. Secretary of war, Marcy, in his report to Kearny (Commander of the "Army of the West") said:

It is known that a large body of Mormon emigrants are en route to California, for the purpose of settling in that country. You are desired to use all possible means to have a good understanding with them, to the end that the United States army may have their co-operation in taking possession of, and holding that country. It has been suggested here that many of these Mormons would willingly enter into the service of the United States, and aid us in our expedition against California. You are hereby authorized to muster into service such as can be induced to volunteer; not, however, to a number exceeding one-third of your entire force. Should they enter the service they will be paid as other volunteers, and you can allow them to designate, so far as it can be properly done, the persons to act as officers thereof.¹⁸

These instructions were forwarded to Captain Allen of the First Regular Dragoons and he was told to proceed to the Mormon camps and endeavor to raise four or five companies. He was sent by the Mormons to the camp of Brigham Young at Council Bluffs, the winter quarters of the Saints, where, after a council with the leaders, the matter was presented to the people at a public meeting.

There was some reluctance on the part of the Mormons to respond to this unexpected call. It was of mutual advantage, the Mormons had asked for aid in moving their people to California; while the government needed a volunteer force which in no other way could be raised so promptly. The Saints, however, regarded it as a mere requisition for troops, and in numbers all out of proportion to the population that was to furnish them. It was not from lack of courage, Tyler tells us, that they hesitated, but they had been deceived so many times by those who held authority in the nation, that they looked upon this new requisition with distrust,¹⁹ and as a test of loyalty to the nation which, according to their view, had virtually thrust them from its borders and permitted mobs to plunder them and murder their prophets.²⁰ Assistance in emi-

18. Marcy, Sec. of War. Letter to General Kearny. 1846. Executive Document No. 60, 1st Session, 30th Congress, Serial No. 520, p. 153.

19. Tyler, p. 115, op. cit.

20. Whitney, O. F., *History of Utah*, Vol. 1, p. 260.

grating with their families, or work of any kind on the route of their journey by which they could earn a subsistence, would have been hailed with delight. But joining the army and leaving their families in a desperate condition, was a different matter. Regarding it, as many did, as a device to weaken them and hasten their destruction, although Captain Allen represented the call as an act of benevolence on the part of the government, it is doubtful if he would have got one of the Saints to join him if it had been left to his own influence.²¹

Linn feels that there was nothing of a "demand" on the Mormons in this matter, and that the advantage of acceptance was largely on their side. Had it not been, it would have been rejected.²² John Taylor, writing to the British Saints said, "The President of the United States is favorably disposed to us." He tells of the enlistment, then, "it amounts to the same as paying them for going to the place where they were destined to go without."²³ Golder is of the opinion that Brigham Young, better than anyone else, knew what a God-send to the Mormons this was and grasped at the opportunity.²⁴

Ignoring the feelings of the men who would have to leave their destitute families, the leaders, headed by Brigham Young, set about the work of recruiting at once. Stress was laid on the advantages of being the first settlers, of the chance to refute the charge of disloyalty, and of the free outfits and pay to be received, for the pecuniary assistance was badly needed. Young told them that if they wanted the privilege of going where they could worship God as they pleased, the battalion must be raised.

"We have lived near so many old settlers who would always say 'get out', that we should be thankful for the privilege of going to settle a new country," he said and reminded them that should the country ultimately come under the government of the United States, that they would be the old settlers who could say "get out."²⁵

Urging that they could not ask for anything more accept-

21. Tyler, p. 116, op. cit.

22. Linn, W. A., *The Story of the Mormons*, p. 371.

23. *Millennial Star*, Vol. 8, No. 8, p. 248, op. cit.

24. Golder, p. 34, op. cit.

25. *Historical Record*, Vol. 8, p. 908, from *Journal History*. One diary records, "Friday, 3, (46). We met President Young, Heber Kimball and Dr. Richards going back to raise volunteers. They feel that this is a good prospect for our deliverance and if we do not do it we are downed." Clayton, Wm., *Journal of William Clayton*, p. 68.

able than this mission, the requisite number was secured. Enrollment began at a public meeting, July thirteenth, under an American flag hoisted to a tree mast. On the sixteenth, Captain Allen took command of the battalion which numbered about five hundred men.²⁶

Much sacrifice was necessarily involved; families were left behind, wagons were left without teamsters, and for the men themselves, a long hard march over the almost unknown desert ahead.

The call could not have been more inconveniently timed. The young and those who could best have been spared, were then away from the main body, either with pioneer companies in the van, or, their faith unannounced, seeking work and food about the northwestern settlements. - - - The force was therefore to be recruited from among the fathers of families, and others whose presence it was most desirable to retain.²⁷

Obeing the call of their leaders, the men prepared to leave, however, regardless of their personal convictions.

One of the last acts of the soldiers before their departure was to subscribe a large part of their pay for their families and the Mormon poor. The captains and some of the men were accompanied by their families, about eighty women and children in all. They arrived at Fort Leavenworth on August first, where they received their equipment. Here Colonel Allen died, and Lieutenant A. J. Smith was given temporary command. After some difficulty, the Mormons charging that the command belonged to the senior Captain Hunt, one of their own men, according to arrangement with Colonel Allen, Smith was finally accepted. He was very unpopular, all the diaries confirming his cruelty, weakness and want of skill.²⁸

More serious trouble occurred with the physician, a Doctor Sanderson from Missouri, who had been sent out with Smith. Asserting that he was a quack, and that he had been heard to say that he would send as many of them to hell as he could,²⁹ the soldiers refused to take his medicine. All accounts and

26. Roberts, p. 18, op. cit.

27. Kane, Thomas, *Address to the Mormons*, in Tyler, p. 79, op. cit. Kane expected to go west with the Mormons but got no farther than the Mississippi, due to illness.

28. Bancroft, *California*, Vol. 5, p. 480, (F. N.) Standage *Diary*. Brown, J. S., *Life of a Pioneer*, p. 36.

29. Golder, p. 168, from *Journal History*, p. 228, op. cit., from Wm. Hyde's *Diary* Brown complains of him also, p. 81 and 85, op. cit.

diaries tell of the resulting difficulties. The Mormons believed in healing by laying on of hands, and mention is frequently made of such cases as when Tyler records being healed by the anointing with oil and the laying on of hands, whereat he went on his way rejoicing. He also quotes a letter of Young's to the soldiers, dated August 19, '46.

If you are sick, live by faith, and let surgeon's medicine alone if you want to live, using only such herbs and mild food as are at your disposal. If you heed this counsel, you will prosper; but if not, we cannot be responsible for the consequences. A hint to the wise is sufficient.³⁰

Aside from the question of "calomel," the medicine most frequently administered, there was little trouble between men and officers.

Many hardships and much suffering were endured; the country was unknown to the guides and overmarching was frequent. Short rations, excessive toil in roadmaking and well digging, lack of water and much illness with a few deaths were experienced. At the last crossing of the Arkansas river in September, it was felt advisable to detach most of the families who were sent on to Pueblo, a Mexican town located farther up the river, now in Colorado, where they could meet their friends. There was much complaint at this, but, says Roberts, it unquestionably was for the best interests of all.³¹ Again at Santa Fe more of the sick were detached and sent to Pueblo and the sufferings of the battalion were less severe from that time.

At Santa Fe, Colonel P. S. Cooke took command. He writes that their condition was deplorable.

Everything conspired to discourage the extraordinary undertaking of marching the Battalion eleven hundred miles, for the much greater part through an unknown wilderness; without road or trail, and with a wagon train.³²

Both Cooke and Tyler complain of the equipment furnished, especially the mules.³³

Further discussion of their journey is unnecessary here.

30. Tyler, p. 132 and 146, op. cit.

31. Roberts, p. 30, op. cit.

32. Cooke, Col. P. S., *Conquest of New Mexico and California*, p. 91.

33. Cooke, p. 93, op. cit. Tyler, p. 175, op. cit. Their most exciting experience was a battle with some wild bulls which attacked them. Tyler, p. 219. op. cit.

Good accounts may be found in Tyler, Roberts and Golder. On January twenty-first, they camped at Warner's ranch, (San Diego County) where they were not inhospitably received, according to Bancroft, in spite of statements to the contrary.³⁴

Cooke proposed to go first to Los Angeles, having had information that the enemy were concentrating there, but he later received orders to proceed to San Diego according to his original instructions. So turning southward, they passed the deserted mission of San Luis Rey and soon came within sight of the ocean near where the town of Oceanside now lies. Tyler wrote:

One mile below the mission we ascended a bluff, when the long-long-looked for Pacific Ocean appeared plain to our view, only about three miles distant. The joy, the cheer that filled our souls, none but the worn-out pilgrims nearing a haven of rest can imagine. Prior to leaving Nauvoo, we had talked about and sung of "the great Pacific sea," and we were now upon its very borders, and its beauty far exceeded our most sanguine expectations.³⁵

Proceeding down the coast, they arrived at the San Diego Mission on the twenty-ninth, 1847. There were but a few Indians left, says Henry Standage in his diary, and they seemed to be glad the Spaniards had gone.³⁶ Captain Cooke has left an interesting description of the mission.

The building being delapidated, and in use by some dirty Indians, I camped the Battalion on the flat below. There are around us extensive gardens and vineyards, wells and cisterns, more or less fallen into decay and disorder; but also olive and picturesque date trees, flourishing and ornamental. There is no fuel for miles around, and the dependence for water is some rather distant pools in the Sandy San Diego, which runs, (some times) down to the ocean.³⁷

On the thirteenth, Colonel Cooke issued a congratulatory order, commending the battalion for their achievements, saying: "History may be searched in vain for an equal march of

34. Bancroft, *California*, Vol. 5, p. 486, op. cit. Bancroft says that Cooke has no complaint of Warner, but calls him quite a study. *Ibid.*, p. 486.

35. Tyler, p. 252, op. cit.

36. Golder, p. 206. Quoting *Diary of Henry Standage*, op. cit.

37. Cooke, p. 196, op. cit., Description written January 29, 1847.

infantry.”³⁸ This was received with cheers by the men, unaccustomed as they were to being complimented.

The war in California was over when the Battalion arrived. However a garrison was needed during the period of military occupation, and in this the Mormons did faithful service, and, says Roberts, they assisted in making secure the conquest achieved.³⁹ Bancroft, however, feels that the Mormons themselves have always been disposed to overestimate the value of their services at this period, attaching undue importance to the rumors of reconquest by the Mexicans and of revolt of the Californians. They also claim credit for helping Kearny maintain his authority against the revolutionary pretensions of Fremont.⁴⁰ Tullidge writes:

What a difference if Little had arrived (at Washington) six months earlier or later—General Kearny would not have had at his back the Mormon Battalion as his chief force when he made himself master of the land of precious metals and put his rival, Fremont, under arrest.⁴¹

An enmity developed between the Mormons and the men of Fremont's Battalion, possibly due to prejudice, as Fremont was the son-in-law of Senator Benton of Missouri, whom the Mormons had previously accused of discrediting them. The Californians had formed an unfavorable opinion of the Mormons before they arrived, but they succeeded in almost entirely removing this feeling by their splendid conduct. One reports that their bad name had preceded them, saying:

The arrival of the Mormon Battalion was dreaded, and had the whole company attempted to settle in the valley of the Franciscan Bay and waters, there is good reason to believe that it would have caused a fresh revolt of the Californians.⁴²

Lieutenant Minor testified in the court martial trial of Fremont:

“Report had preceded them (the Mormons) to California that they were a lawless and abandoned set. I allude to the

38. *Ibid.*, p. 197, “Order No. 1” from Headquarters Mormon Battalion, Mission San Diego, January 30, 1847. In his Journal of their march, Cooke says the men were undrilled and undisciplined, though obedient, but showed heedlessness and ignorance and some obstinacy. Senate Document, No. 2, 31st Congress, Special Session, p. 3.

39. Roberts, 53, *op. cit.*

40. Bancroft, *California*, Vol. 5, p. 487, *op. cit.*

41. Tullidge, E. W., *History of Utah*, p. 51.

42. Willard, Emma, *Last Leaves of American History*, p. 178.

whole tribe of Mormons, not to Colonel Cooke's command."⁴³ Other writers made similar references to the reports which had preceded the Mormons.

That they succeeded in removing this prejudice is quite evident from the records that have been left. Hittell speaks well of their conduct.

Notwithstanding the prejudices felt against them on account of their religious professions, and notwithstanding Stevenson who was in command at Los Angeles imagined them to be engaged in a diabolical conspiracy to get military control of California—Mason spoke of them in terms of high praise.⁴⁴ So high an opinion in fact did he entertain of the battalion in general and of their especial fitness for the duties of garrisoning the country, that he made strenuous effort to engage their services for another year.⁴⁵

Captain Jefferson Hunt, writing to Brigham Young, said that Fremont and the Missourians had given them a bad name, but he adds:

The inhabitants, however, are joyfully disappointed. They find that we are a much superior race to the "Americans." Everywhere we have been we have left a good impression upon the minds of the people.⁴⁶

Golder, writing in 1923, says that some of the Indians of the Southwest still make a distinction between "Americans" and "Mormons."⁴⁷ In morals and general behavior, says Bancroft, they were much superior to the other troops, due probably to the influence of their religious leaders.⁴⁸

A complaint comes from one quarter, however. Smythe, in his history of San Diego writes:

One thing they did which the present historian regrets, as those of the future are likely to. They were quartered in an old building in which public

43. Minor, Lt. Testimony of, as witness for the defense in Court Martial trial of Lt. Colonel Fremont. Senate Document, No. 33, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 243, Serial No. 507.

44. "Of the services of this battalion, of their patience, subordination, and general good conduct, you have already heard; and I take great pleasure in adding that, as a body of men, they have religiously respected the rights and feelings of these conquered people; and not a syllable of complaint has reached my ear of a single insult offered or an outrage done by a Mormon volunteer." Executive Document No. 17, H. R. 1st session, 31st Congress, Report of Gov. Mason to Adg. General, p. 336, serial No. 573, (R. B.) Col. U. S. Dragoons.

45. Hittell, T. H., *History of California*, Vol. 2, p. 662.

46. Golder, p. 251, op. cit. Letter of Capt. Hunt to Pres. Young.

47. *Ibid.*, 251, (footnote).

48. Bancroft, *California*, Vol. 5, p. 488, op. cit.

documents were stored and they used some of these documents for fuel and thereby destroyed the records of the past.⁴⁹

A few of the men were stationed at San Luis Rey for a time. Father Engelhardt speaks well of their conduct while there, saying that it is unlikely that they destroyed anything of the Mission, rather, on the contrary, "they appear to have let everything alone, even made repairs."⁵⁰

Some were sent to Los Angeles where they were occupied with building a fort, due to a report of the approach of a Mexican force. The diary of Henry Standage gives us an interesting description of Los Angeles as seen through the eyes of a Mormon in 1847.

They are the most degraded set of beings I ever was among, professing to be civilized and taught in the Roman Catholic religion. There are almost as many grog shops and gambling houses in this city as there are private houses. Only five or six stores and no mechanics shop. A tolerable sized Catholic church, built of unburnt brick and houses of same material. Roofs made of reeds and pitched on the outside—Roofs flat. There are some three or four roofs built American fashion and covered with tiles burnt English fashion. The Spaniards in general own large farms in the country and keep from one to twenty thousand head of cattle. Horses in abundance, mules, sheep, goats, etc. Also the Indians do all the labor and the Mexicans are generally on horse back from morning till night. They are perhaps the greatest horsemen in the known world, and very expert with the lance and lasso. They are in general a very idle, profligate, drunken, swearing set of wretches, with but very few exceptions. The Spaniards conduct in the grog shops is really filthy and disgusting even in the day time. Gambling is carried to the highest pitch, men often losing five hundred dollars in cash in one night, or a thousand head of cattle. All kinds of clothing is very cheap and cattle and horses very cheap. Horses from five to twenty-five dollars and the very best mares from one dollar fifty to ten

49. Smythe, Wm. E., *History of San Diego*, Vol. 1, p. 228.

50. Engelhardt, Fr. Z., *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, Vol. 4, p. 590. Tyler speaks of the work and repairs necessary at San Luis Rey and describes the mission, p. 263-64. He says, also, that Co. "C" was sent to guard Cajon pass, p. 277, op. cit.

dollars; mules very cheap. Cattle from five to six dollars.⁵¹

While in San Diego letters were received by the Battalion men telling of the safe arrival in San Francisco of Sam Brannan with his brethern in the ship *Brooklyn*.⁵²

Upon his arrival, General Kearny tried to promote a re-enlistment, but was unsuccessful—their spiritual leader, Father Pettigrew said “No” and his word was accepted. Kearny departed with Cooke, who took twelve of the Mormons with him as a body guard. These men were discharged at Fort Leavenworth and joined their families at Salt Lake.⁵³ The remainder of the battalion were mustered out on July fifteenth.

The question of re-enlistment again arose. It was favored by the Mormon officers of the battalion as the best means of aiding the work of the Lord and their absent families. A proposition was made by the War Department, for Captain Jefferson Hunt to take command of a second battalion of Mormons. Governor Mason was anxious to have them re-enlist and sent Stevenson a copy of a letter he had written Hunt, adding, “I beg of you to use your best efforts to accomplish the object I have therein proposed.”⁵⁴ Stevenson tried to persuade Brigham Young to sanction the enlistment, and told him that the old prejudice against the Mormons had entirely disappeared, that there was a strong feeling of respect for them and a general desire for them to remain in the service.⁵⁵ Hunt went to Young about it, but he felt that the original enlistment had been sufficient sacrifice, and further service was not favored by the men themselves.

It is probable that Young would gladly have furnished another battalion, thinks Bancroft, had they still intended to establish their home in California, but the decision to settle in Salt Lake made it undesirable to part with the bone and

51. Golder, p. 220-221, *Standage Diary*, op. cit. He mentions also the small number of graves in the cemetery due to the climate being so pure and free from febrile diseases. Brown mentions such vices as horseracing, etc., saying that the Sabbath seemed the best time for it. Brown, p. 84, op. cit.

52. Bigler, Henry, *Personal Letters to Bancroft*, p. 40.

53. Tyler, p. 283, op. cit.

54. Mason in report says offered Hunt command. Col. Mess and Doc., Report 17, p. 357. Engelhardt, p. 590, op. cit. From *Halleck's Report*, p. 326. Halleck was a government engineer, here for a Coast survey.

55. Golder, p. 251-52, op. cit.

sinew of the Saints.⁵⁶ Undoubtedly he is right, for Brigham Young was far-sighted enough to realize that he must keep his Saints near at hand in order to keep them under his control, besides they were needed to help develop and maintain the "empire" he hoped to create.

One company, however, did re-enlist for a term of six months. Captain Jessie Hunter also remained, and was made Indian Agent at San Luis Rey, (at the suggestion of Colonel Stevenson), at a salary of seven hundred and fifty dollars a year. In six months he was able to report that they had raised a small crop of wheat on the mission farm at Pala, and had induced the Indians to do the same on their own account.⁵⁷ A child born to Mrs. Hunter while they were in San Diego was the first child whose parents were both Americans to be born in Old San Diego.⁵⁸

Those who re-enlisted were occupied with mechanical work rather than with regular army duties. The diary of Henry Boyle states:

I think I whitewashed all San Diego. We did their blacksmithing, put up a bakery, made and repaired carts, and in fine, did all we could to benefit ourselves as well as citizens. We never had any trouble with Californians or Indians, nor they with us. The citizens became so attached to us, that before our term of service expired they got up a petition to the governor to use his influence to keep us in the service. This petition was signed by every citizen in town.⁵⁹

The first brick made in San Diego was made by these men.⁶⁰

In March, 1848, this company was mustered out. More than half of them remained for a time, some permanently, going north to the mines, towns and farms. Twenty-five were outfitted for their journey at William's ranch, and left April twelfth, piloted by James Shaw and Orrin P. Rockwell, who had traveled the route the previous winter. They had one wagon and one hundred and thirty-five mules. They arrived

56. Bancroft, *California*, Vol. 5, p. 497, op. cit. "The enlistment of the Mormon Battalion - - - has proved a great blessing. - - - It was indeed the temporal salvation of our camp." Golder, p. 247, op. cit. Letter of Brigham Young, *Journal Hist.*

57. Engelhardt, p. 596, op. cit. From California Archives. Unbound Document, Bancroft Collection.

58. Smythe, p. 228, op. cit.

59. Tyler, p. 380, op. cit. From *Diary of Henry Boyle*.

60. Ibid, 287. "Those Mormons taught the indolent Californians a good lesson." Engelhardt, p. 592, op. cit.

at Salt Lake on June fifth, theirs being the first wagon to traverse the Southern route across the Mojave Desert between Salt Lake and Southern California.

“Thus another great national road for wagons was pioneered by the enterprise of a portion of the indomitable Battalion of Mormons or Latter Day Saints.”⁶¹

The men of the original Battalion, after an unsuccessful effort to find Walker's pass, started for Sutter's Fort, where they arrived August twenty-sixth. A few were given permission to stay during the winter for the much needed wages. The rest started to follow Kearny's trail over the Sierras. On the way they came upon the scene of the Donner disaster, stopping to bury many of the bodies. The next day they met Sam Brannan, returning from a visit to the Saints in the east. Brannan had met Young and his followers on their way west and learned of their intention to settle in the Great Basin, as has been related. After a futile attempt to persuade them to go on to the coast, he left in disgust, to return to San Francisco. He advised the Battalion men to turn back and work until spring, when, very likely the Church leaders would realize their mistake in settling at Salt Lake and would come on to California. The men were not persuaded, however, until the following day when they met Captain James Brown, who had had command of the group which had been sent back to Pueblo from Santa Fe. He had letters for many of the men and a dispatch from the twelve elders advising those who had no means to remain in California for work during the winter.⁶² Many went on to Salt Lake, but about half returned to New Helvetia and were hired by Sutter. In his *Personal Reminiscences*, Sutter speaks of their arrival.⁶³

Having passed the winter there and participated in the discovery of gold, they answered the call of duty in the spring and made their way to Salt Lake to their families and friends, their return a striking tribute to the power of Young over his Saints. The trip, made at the expense of much labor, for they made a new roadway over the mountains, around the

61. Tyler, p. 331, op. cit.

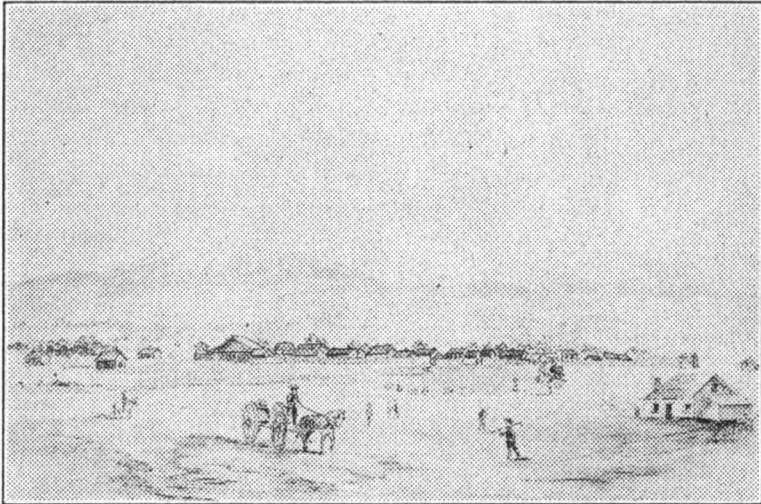
62. Bancroft, *California*, Vol. 5, p. 495, op. cit.

63. About eighty of them were hired by men at the Fort. "They were very good people. In settling accounts I had not one word of difficulty with any of them." Sutter, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 162.

southern end of Lake Tahoe and into Carson Valley, opened a new route over the mountains.⁶⁴ Thus to the Mormons are the Californians indebted for pioneering roads in several parts of the State.

They arrived at Salt Lake on October first, feeling glad that they had exchanged the land of gold for families and friends. The money they had earned bought the land where Ogden now is, and the seeds which they had secured in California, with the methods of irrigation and cultivation they had learned, turned the desert-like valley into a Garden of Eden.

64. Tyler, p. 336, *op. cit.* Brooks speaks of seeing this fresh made trail, saying it was made by the Mormons. Brooks, T. T., *Four Months Among the Gold Finders*, p. 64.



San Bernardino was founded by Mormon colonists. This is the earliest sketch of the desert city, drawn about 1852.