

A1a
#10

HYMN TO NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA
AND RECORD OF



HISTORY
PIONEER DAYS

All sustaining members of the Nebraska State Historical Society receive Nebraska History and other publications without further payment.

Published Quarterly by the Nebraska State Historical Society

Addison E. Sheldon, Editor

Subscription, \$2.00 per year

Vol. VII

April-June, 1924

No. 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|-------|
| Hymn to Nebraska, by Rev. H. Buss of Fremont | 33-36 |
| The Pioneer Doctor | 37 |
| The Plum Creek Railroad Attack, 1867 | 38-39 |
| Historical Paragraphs | 40-45 |
| Monuments to Bohemian Pioneers and Pawnee Indian "Sky Chief" | 46-47 |
| Elijah Filley, Leader in Improved Farming, by Prof. H. Clyde Filley | 48-54 |
| The Stone Grave People of Nebraska and Kansas, Mark E. Zimmerman, of White Cloud | 55-57 |
| Historical Notes | 57-58 |
| Quakers and Nebraska Indians in 1869 | 59-61 |
| The Mormon Trail Across Nebraska | 62-63 |
| Santee Indian Agency in Peril | 64 |

This Issue Published March, 1925

Entered as second class matter February 4, 1918, at the Post Office, Lincoln, Nebraska, under Act August 24, 1912.

THE MORMON TRAIL ACROSS NEBRASKA

The Historians of the Mormon Church at Salt Lake City Plan an Expedition Next Summer from the Missouri River to Utah, Marking and Mapping the Trail Made by the Earliest Mormon Travelers on the North Side of the Platte River

In July, 1924, the editor of this magazine visited the library and offices of the Historical Society maintained by the Mormon Church at Salt Lake City. The work done by these people is another Western wonder. Their library includes a large amount of Western history material not found anywhere else in the world. Their library of genealogy is one of the finest in the United States. A group of very scholarly and able men and women are constantly at work compiling and publishing the history of the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Among the most active in this work is Andrew Jenson, a veteran scholar and speaker. He informed the editor of this magazine of the plans of their people to make a record of the journeys of the Mormon people from the Mississippi Valley to the Salt Lake Basin. The first regular wagon trail up the north side of the Platte was the one made by Brigham Young and a party of 140 people in the spring of 1847. The trail made by this party was followed by other Mormon immigrants as well as by many not belonging to that church.

Some changes and cut-offs were made in this trail which has been called the Mormon Trail, the California Trail, the Military Road and even by some the "Oregon Trail." Many of the later immigrants to Oregon travelled this route up the north side of the Platte, but the original "Oregon Trail" started from Westport, Missouri, (now Kansas City) and followed the south bank of the Platte as far as Big Springs where it crossed the South Platte and followed the south bank of the North Platte to the Wyoming line. This is the true "Oregon Trail." The trails on the north side of the Platte ought to bear a distinctive name to avoid confusion. The following letter received from Historian Jenson is of importance to all persons interested in Nebraska History:

Salt Lake City, Oct. 11, 1924.

Dear Mr. Sheldon:

Your kind favor of the 29th ult. received and contents noted. In answer I am pleased to say that we shall be perfectly willing to cooperate with you in every possible way to establish the exact route of the old Mormon Trail through Nebraska, but before we can finish anything that we should consider of sufficient importance to print, I feel, for one, that it would be necessary to go over the trail and at this late day tract it all through and locate camping places accurately according to government surveys, note the present location of towns in connection with the early trail and give a minute account of early travels.

Answering your question as to the perusal of private diaries, I will say that we are compiling a very complete and accurate history of the travels of the first company of "Mormon" pioneers who blazed the way from the Missouri river under President Brigham Young in 1847. As one of the sources of information we have the use of six distinct journals kept by six prominent men who crossed the plains in President Young's company. Based upon the information they give us, we shall be able to follow the trail without difficulty all the way across the plains and mountains.

I expect personally to make a trip over the old trail next spring and would be very pleased to associate myself with parties of your historical

society who might be officially appointed for the purpose. Sufficient time should be spent on the journey to make the expedition a success.

Besides the diaries mentioned, we have perused scores of other diaries relating to the crossing of the plains by companies later than 1847, or up to the time the railroad was completed in 1869. We also have some sketch maps of the route, but they are not accurate.

I remember with pleasure your short visit with us quite recently. I trust that in the future we may be brought closer together, and that with our combined efforts we shall be able to locate the "Mormon," "California" and "Oregon" trails through the state of Nebraska.

ANDREW JENSON,
Assistant Church Historian.

P. S.—What chances would there be to secure a copy of your Nebraska historical publications, either by purchase, exchange, or both. We would like to own every volume that you have published which contain anything about the "Mormon" people especially.

The Lexington Pioneer of December 28, 1923, contains an interesting story relating to early practice of medicine in that region. The story was related by Miss Laura MacColl to Mrs. M. C. Whitaker in 1910.

"The late John H. MacColl came to Dawson county in 1869 to benefit his health, but shortly after reaching here he had an attack of mountain fever that left his lower limbs paralyzed. The nearest medical aid he could get was from the army surgeon at Fort McPherson, forty miles to the west. He made a number of trips to attend Mr. MacColl and finally told him he would never be any better. An old Indian medicine man happened along about that time and he went to see Mr. MacColl. By curious signs, gesticulations, and grunts, he made Mr. MacColl understand that he could cure him and that he would be back the next day at the rising of the sun. True to his word, he came, bringing with him an interpreter who explained to Mr. MacColl that the medicine man could cure him if he would submit to his treatment. Mr. MacColl was desperate and willing to do almost anything, so he agreed. The patient was stripped and laid flat on a plank. The medicine man then took a sawedged knife and made no less than a hundred tiny gashes all over his patient's body. This done he produced a queer herb and began chewing it. Then he spun it in his hand, as needed, and rubbed it into each tiny wound. That was all and in three days Mr. MacColl could stand alone, and in a week he could walk."

A correspondent of the Republican at Central City tells stories of things familiar in the childhood of the editor of this magazine. Among others is the story of a "molasses pan," used on the Platte river in 1878. A molasses pan was a large frame box with an iron bottom used in the pioneer days to boil down sorghum. There were hundreds of them scattered over Nebraska in the pioneer period. They made most convenient boats for transportation and were generally used in flood times to get across the streams. The first molasses pan voyage made by the editor of this magazine was in a sorghum pan owned by Phillip Michael on the West Blue near Beaver Crossing in 1869. The molasses pan on the Platte river was used as a means of getting out on the stream in order to shoot wild ducks and geese.