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RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

MT. PISGAH

MORMON CEMETERY

RECENT "DISCOVERY" SHOWS MOUNT PISGAH MORMON CEMETERY, UNION COUNTY, IOWA, TO BE CHURCH PROPERTY.

By RICHARDS L. EVANS

HISTORICAL DOCUMENT CREDITS MORMONS WITH HAVING BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN OBTAINING STATEHOOD FOR IOWA IN 1846.

AS A RESULT of the tenth Historic Pilgrimage conducted by Vida Fox Clawson to Winter Quarters and other points of Church interest has come the "discovery" that the Mount Pisgah Mormon Cemetery in Union County, Iowa, is the property of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—a fact which apparently was heretofore not a matter of record either in the Church Historian's Office or in the Presiding Bishop's Office, because its acquisition

in 1886 had apparently been forgotten. Being a cemetery, no tax notice has ever been issued to the Church for this property.

The fact of the Church ownership of this historic site came to light through the interest and inquiry of Mr. Ralph Budd, President of the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy Railroad. Mr. Budd, who attended the dedication of the Winter Quarters Monument at Florence, Nebraska, personally conducted the Historic Pilgrimage group that was present on that occasion to Mount Pisgah Mormon Cemetery in Union County, Iowa, some 115 miles southeast of Winter Quarters, and spent the day with them there. Mr. Budd, observing that the nature of the grass indicated virgin ground and that the plot was fenced in, unimproved, uncared for, and undisturbed, inquired as to possible Church ownership.

Since no member of the party was able to inform him on this point, Mr. Budd undertook a private investigation and a week later there came the following letter:

Mrs. Vida Fox Clawson
29 South State St.
Salt Lake City
Dear Mrs. Clawson:

I enclose a short article prepared by Mrs. Mertle R. Brunson, dealing with the Mormon trek across Iowa and their temporary

settlement at Mt. Pisgah. Her husband conducts the Brunson Studio at Creston, Iowa, and has made a number of photographs of the monument located in the burial lot, which are also enclosed.

The article is an absorbing narrative and I thought you would be interested in also reading it, as well as having the photographs.

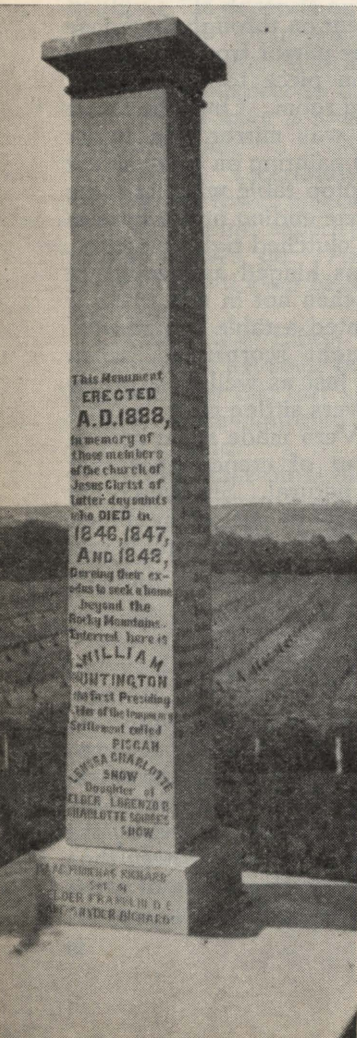
Yours very truly,
(Signed) Ralph Budd.

P. S. I also enclose copies of two deeds found of record at Creston, Iowa, concerning the burial ground, and two maps locating the parcel of land, transferred by A. C. White to John Taylor, Mormon Trustee, on June 12, 1886.

R. B.

The two deeds referred to, one of which is reproduced herewith, were dated May 3, 1886, and June 12, 1886. The first one was made out in error to O. B. Huntington as Trustee-in-Trust of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and the second one, executed to correct the error of the first, was made to President John Taylor, Trustee-in-Trust. The consideration was thirty dollars paid to Albert C. and Ellen White, husband and wife, for one acre of land. A reasonable conclusion is that O. B. Huntington negotiated for the property in behalf of the Church and was erroneously described as Trustee-in-Trust in the first deed.

The monument, a reproduction of which accompanies this article, was erected on this site in the year 1888 "in memory of those members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who died in 1846,



CLOSE UP OF FRONT FACE OF MOUNT PISGAH MONUMENT.

TENTH HISTORIC PILGRIMAGE GROUP AT MT. PISGAH.



**Names of the Dead on the Monument
at "Pisgah" Cemetery**

William Huntington	Mr. Hays (side of river)
Lenora Charlotte Snow	Joseph Merryfield
Isaac P. Richards	Mr. Cook
Ezra T. B. Adair	Wife of Mr. Brown
Nancy Workman	Mr. Thompson
Samuel Workman	William Selvanias
Samuel Steel	Bishop
Simeon Thayer	Joseph Franklin
Gloah Thayer	Bishop
Jessy Hitchcock, a wife	Angelia Carter
Clark Hallet	Stranger. Not in the Church.
Phebe Hallet	Henry Judson
Ann Gould Hallet	Alexander Gay
Louese Hallet s.	Benjamin Gay
Two other children	Emma Jane Johnson
Sarah Hulet	Martha A. Dana
Sarah Ann Hulet	Betsy Corley Shipley (or Curley)
Noah Rogers	Nephi Shipley
Amos Phileman Rogers	David McKee
Mary Brimit (or Briant) Ensign	Polly Sweat
Margaret Josephine Billingsley	Louisa Cox
Hyrum Spencer	Eliza Cox
Alvah Hancock	Henry Davis
Gardner Edminson	Joel Campbell
Philunda Calvin Jordan	Emily Whiting
Joseph Smith	Elisha Whiting
Billingsley	Saltu Whiting
Elkano Keller	Widow Head
Mrs. Baldwin and Baby	Whiting
Mr. Hess (buried on west)	Elizabeth Daniels
	Rebecca Adair
	William P. Mangum
	Lane Ann Mangum
	Jemima Mangum
	Adah (Adair)
	William Jefferson
	Adah (Adair)

The camps were now traveling through an Indian country, where there were no roads, no settlements and only Indian trails. The spring rains having ceased, however, greater progress was made although a road had to be prepared all the way, and bridges built over all the streams. (*Essentials in Church History*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, p. 407.)

MRS. MERTLE R. BRUNSON, a non-member of the Church, residing at Creston, Iowa, has written a brief history of the Mormons at Mount Pisgah, a copy of which has come to us through Mr. Ralph Budd. This document credits the Mormons with having been instrumental in obtaining statehood for Iowa in 1846. From it we quote the following excerpts:—

The exodus of a persecuted and misunderstood group of people from Nauvoo, Illinois, into Iowa and through Iowa in the very early days, which people were bound for Utah, a prospective religious Mecca, had much to do with the first settlements in Union County, Iowa.

The gold seekers in their pell-mell rush to California followed the Mormon trail, using the same fords and rude bridges across streams and following the traces in the

MR. RALPH BUDD, PRESIDENT, BURLINGTON RAILROAD.



and made first camp on Sugar Creek. Here they rested for a week to plan further and to organize. Then the Mormons started on in spring rains, traveling through bottomless sloughs, through high grasses, their wagons being pulled by oxen.

So they came on through the countries of southwestern Iowa by way of points now known as Garden Grove, Lamoni, and Pisgah.

Having lost many of their number by death en route, a vast number being ill from exposure during chilly spring rains, lack of food and insufficient warm clothing, the Mormon leader determined upon a temporary camp on the high rolling land overlooking the beautiful, fertile valley of the wide, majestically flowing Grand River. Here the Mormons remained for a period of years, from June, 1846 until 1852, when the last of the brave band left for Utah.

They built log cabins for many of their people. Others camped for a period in wagons and tents. It is stated that at one period of time as many as 3000 people, sick and feeble babes in arms, older children, stalwart men and women, comprised the settlement. The Mormons built . . . a school house, set up some shops, and in general created a temporary village. Later, when they had gone, these buildings were used by the permanent white settlers who

MT. PISGAH MARKER ERECTED BY THE IOWA D. A. R., 1928, TO UNION COUNTY'S FIRST WHITE SETTLERS.



DISTANT VIEW OF MT. PISGAH MONUMENT.

1847, and 1848, during their exodus to seek a home beyond the Rocky Mountains." The three-score names appearing on the four sides of the monument are also reproduced herewith, although some of them are indistinct and may be subject to error. The names of many who died here are not recorded on the monument.

Concerning the significance of Mount Pisgah in Church History, Joseph Fielding Smith has written the following paragraph:

MOUNT PISGAH. On the 18th of May 1846, Pres. Young and several of the apostles reached the middle fork of Grand River, some twenty-seven miles west of Garden Grove. Here Parley P. Pratt with a company was found encamped. He had called the place Mount Pisgah, and here it was decided to make another settlement for the Saints. Several thousand acres of land were fenced for cultivation, after the manner of the settlement at Garden Grove, and this place became a resting place for the weary exiles for several years while crossing the plains. Elder William Huntington was chosen to preside with Elders Ezra T. Benson and Charles C. Rich as counselors.

deep grasses of the prairies in the mud ruts of sloughs, that had been cut by iron-shod wagons of the strong-hearted men and women during the period of 1830 to 1860.

Years later Colonel Alfred Hebard of Red Oak, Iowa, when commissioned to find a route for the railroad, followed the old Mormon trail and the railroad was laid out along this route from Burlington to Fairfield in 1858. Later the road extended to Afton, to Creston, as each town became founded, until now it is a great artery of commerce extending across this vast continent.

The Mormons left the state of Illinois, a vast army in numbers, after a period of constant conflict with neighbors in the locality of Nauvoo. It was here that their main settlement had been located. Here were their temple and the residence of their leader. They became powerful and influential in state affairs, thus arousing the resentment and jealousy of those people who were not of their faith. Killing and outlawry became common. Homes were burned and shops and the temple destroyed. When the Mormon leader, Joseph Smith, and his brother Hyrum were arrested and jailed and killed the Mormons decided to leave.

Brigham Young became the new leader. Early in February, 1846, so history relates, they crossed the Mississippi River on the ice, or were ferried as weather dictated,

A. C. WHITE TO JOHN TAYLOR

Deed

THIS INDENTURE, Made The 12th day of June in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight Hundred and eighty six between Albert C. White and Ellen White Husband and Wife in the County of Union and State of Iowa party of the first part, and John Taylor Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints of Salt Lake City in the County of Salt Lake and Territory of Utah, the party of the second part Witnesseth, That the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Thirty 30.00 dollars lawful money of the United States of America, to us in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged have granted, bargained, sold, aliened, remised, released, conveyed and confirmed and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, alien, remise, release, convey and confirm, unto the said party of the second part and to his successor in the office of Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or assigns forever, all that certain piece or parcel of land known and described as follows to wit: Commencing forty three (43) rods North and five (5) rods West of the center of section eight (8) township Seventy two (72) north Range Twenty eight (28) West of the 5th P. M. thence Twelve (12) rods (12) North thence thirteen and one third (13 1/3) rods West thence twelve (12) rods South, thence Thirteen and one third (13 1/3) to place of beginning, containing one (1) acre of ground and known as the Mormon Burying Ground Union County Iowa.

Together with all and singular tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining, and the rents, issues and profits thereof; and also all the estate, right title interest possession, claim and demand whatsoever, as well in law as in equity, of the said parties of the first part, of, in, or to the said premises, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances.

This Deed is made to correct Error in former Deed Recorded in Book 29 Page 618. To Have and to Hold, all and singular said premises together with the appurtenances unto the said party of the second part, and to his successor in the office of Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or assigns forever, and the said parties of the first part, or his heirs, the said premises in the quiet and peaceable possession of the said party of the second part, his successor in the office of Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints against the said parties of the first part and their heirs lawfully claiming or to claim the same, shall and will warrant and by these presents forever defend.

In Witness Whereof, the said parties of the first part, have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Albert C. White (Seal)
Ellen White (Seal)

United States of America
State of Iowa County of Union SS.

On the tenth day of June A. D. one thousand eight Hundred and eighty six before me a Notary Public within and for Union County in the State of Iowa duly commissioned and qualified, personally appeared Albert C. White and Ellen White, Husband and Wife whose names are subscribed to the annexed instrument as parties thereto, personally known to be the same persons described in and who executed the said annexed instrument, as parties thereto, and duly acknowledged to me that they executed the same freely and voluntarily, and, for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Notarial Seal, at my office in Afton Iowa the day and year in this Certificate first above written.
(Seal) E. S. Ketchum, Notary Public for Union County, Iowa.

located in what was later organized as Union County, having Pisgah for its first town. The first Post Office and the first county election occurred here.

About 300 Mormons died in the first six months of their stay. Many of these were buried in the little cemetery now marked by a tall monument bearing the names of those who could be recalled at the time of the erection of the monument in 1888.

In addition to William Huntington, first presiding elder of the temporary settlement called Pisgah, sixty other names are recorded on this shaft of stone. Other members of the band were buried along the river and along the route of travel coming near Pisgah.

In 1886 the Utah church purchased an acre of land on the site of the once "Pisgah," including this burial spot, where they erected this memorial monument.

Of the 15,000 who had crossed Iowa, making their last camp on the Missouri River at a spot called Miller's Hollow, or Kanessville, and now Council Bluffs, between the dates of 1846 and 1852, little remains to mark the trail. Yet it is marked.

A group of dissenters created a permanent settlement at Lamoni, Iowa, calling themselves the Re-Organized Church of Latter-day Saints. The Historical Societies and Curator Harlan of Historical Museum in Des Moines, Iowa, have caused markers to be placed along the trail through Iowa and monuments to be erected at suitable locations, such as Lamoni, Garden Grove and Mount Pisgah.

The exodus of the Mormons was com-

and land from the Mormons, locating here even before the Mormons pulled stakes for final exit. Here the first Post Office was located with the first permanent settler, Mr. Wm. Lock, appointed as Postmaster. The first school, church, and blacksmith shop set up were here. The first (unpretentious) hotel was here. County history records the first election as held at Pisgah with ten voters present.

These ten voters were living on tillable land deserted by the Mormons, so were able to furnish food to gold seekers and feed for their teams and cattle as they followed the Mormon trail on their way to California in 1848-49. History records that over 2,016 teams passed Pisgah in six weeks. So these earliest settlers waxed rich from the hostelry provided and the provisions which they supplied from their own efforts in that pioneer day.

We should not consider lightly nor with only a passing thought the great drama enacted in the locality called "Pisgah" back in 1846 to 1852, for the thread of history of the Mormon people crosses the thread of history of our own early Iowa settlements. Iowa gained her statehood in 1846 due to influx of population by Mormons, as population was one of the requisites. The railroad followed the trail, and so civilization flooded into this rich, fertile state, ever improving previous endeavor.

In 1846 the nearest settlements were Johnson's settlement, forty-two miles distance; Winterest located twenty-five miles to the north; Rising Sun, located twenty-eight miles east; McDonald's trading post in Missouri, forty-five miles south, and the Supply House of Mormons at Keokuk, two hundred miles back along the trail.

What determination, stout hearts, endurance and religious fervor these Mormon people possessed. It all carried them through bitter hardships, loss of life for some, but salvation for those who survived to found the vast Utah Empire and build the magnificent Temple in Salt Lake City, an emblem of their great devotion to a Christ of their belief.

Compiled and written by
Mertle R. Brunson,
Creston, Iowa.

September 22, 1936.

MAP OF JONES TOWNSHIP, UNION COUNTY, IOWA, SHOWS LOCATION OF MT. PISGAH MORMON CEMETERY.

