

The IMPROVEMENT ERA

AUGUST 1954



NAUVOO TEMPLE RUINS

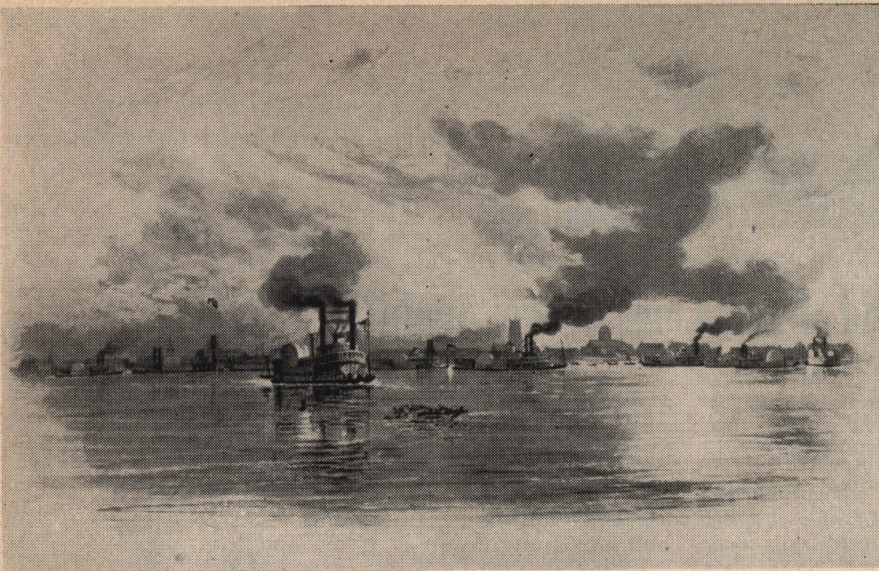
Beginning In This Issue:

“Route From Liverpool To Great Salt Lake Valley”
With Sketches and Accounts by Artist Fredrick Piercy

'Route From Liverpool

With Sketches and

Fredrick



ONE HUNDRED years ago a book was being prepared for publication in England under the title *Route From Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*. The work, which came from the press in 1855, was illustrated with thirty-six steel engravings and nine wood cuts prepared from sketches made by Fredrick Piercy "... together with a geographical and historical description of Utah, and a map of the overland routes to that territory from the Missouri river —also an authentic history of the Latter-day Saints' emigration from Europe from the commencement up to the close of 1855, with statistics."

The title page of the book lists James Linforth as editor and Franklin D. Richards as publisher. It is now a rare collector's item and was called to our attention by Brothers A. William Lund, Assistant Historian,

New Orleans (top) and (left) St. Louis, Missouri, as they appeared in 1853.



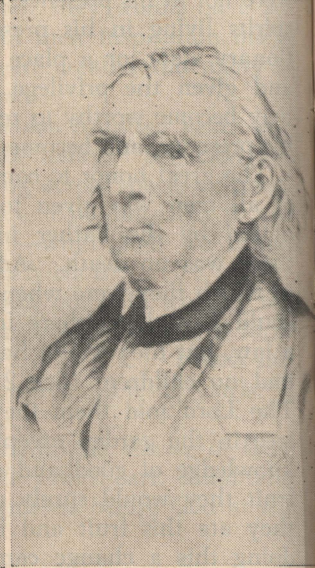
Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Prophet, painted from life.



Joseph Smith the Prophet, from a lithograph published in New York.



Hyrum Smith, from a portrait in the possession of his family.



Patriarch John Smith, of the Prophet, from a daguerreotype.

Great Salt Lake Valley"

Accounts By —

Piercy

by Doyle L. Green

MANAGING EDITOR

and Preston Nibley of the Church Historian's Office, who have also co-operated closely in the preparation of this material.

The fascinating story of how the book came to be is told in the preface: "The following work was originated in 1853, by a desire on the part of many of the Latter-day Saints to possess a collection of engravings of the most notable places on the Route between Liverpool and Great Salt Lake City.

"To gratify this desire, Mr. Piercy and Elder S. W. Richards, then the publisher of the L.D. Saints' Works, in this country, entered into arrangements for the publication of such a collection, and the former made a journey to G. S. L. City and back to

obtain original sketches. The artist could not pass within so short a distance of Nauvoo and Carthage, places of undying interest, and not visit them. Hence we have the views and portraits taken there . . . and on arriving in G.S.L. City, the Artist was kindly favored by President Young with his portrait for publication also.

"On Mr. Piercy's return to England the collection made had far exceeded the original design, but it then seemed imperfect without the portraits of President Kimball and the Patriarch, Father John Smith, both of which were obtained. After the demise of Pres. W. Richards and Father John Smith, portraits of their successors, Jedediah M. Grant and John Smith, were procured from G. S. L. City.

"Having obtained the sketches it was determined to publish them with the artist's narrative of the journey, and entitle the Work, *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley. . . .*"

The entire book is most interesting, but it was the illustrations which particularly attracted our attention. Several of them have been used over a period of many years in this publication without proper credit being

given the artist. Some of the other sketches proved new to us. Whereas dozens of journals were kept by early pioneers who made the trek from England to Salt Lake Valley, these sketches by a young artist, then twenty-three years of age, make up what is probably the first and only journal of drawings made by such a competent craftsman over the route. For this reason a number of sketches are being reproduced in the August and September issues of the ERA along with written descriptions by the artist of some of the places involved.

The first nine chapters in the book give the history of emigration up to 1855. The trip made by Mr. Piercy begins with chapter ten. Starting his account he writes, "On the 5th day of February, 1853, in compliance with previous arrangements, I embarked on the *Jersey* for New Orleans, on my way to Great Salt Lake Valley. My object was to make sketches of the principal and most interesting places on the Route, and Great Salt Lake City, which were afterwards to be published with suitable descriptions and statistics. On my return I was solicited to allow my narrative of the journal to be published likewise. I

(Continued on following page)



Nauvoo from across the river.



Entrance to Kaneshville or Council Bluffs.

Liverpool to the Great Salt Lake Valley

(Continued from preceding page)

consented, although conscious of its want of completeness. . . .”

In the British Mission historical records for 1853, we read that the company of LDS emigrants which sailed on the *Jersey* “consisted of 313 souls, namely 225 adults, 74 children between the ages of one and fourteen, and 14 infants.” In the list of emigrants is the name of Fred Piercy, age, twenty-three, occupation, artist. We have been able to find out little about Mr. Piercy except that he made this trip to Salt Lake, returned to England, and had his sketches and accounts published by the Church in this book. On one of the pages in front of a copy of the book is written in longhand, “Presented to the Church Historian’s Office by Frede. Piercy and James Linforth. Liverpool. May 17, 1856.”

All of the sketches by Mr. Piercy are not included in this series, but rather the ones which seemed to have the most appeal for our present Latter-day Saints.

About the city of New Orleans, which is the first of Artist Piercy’s sketches to appear here, the artist wrote over one hundred years ago: “We had now entered the Great Republic of the United States of North America, and had ascended from ninety to one hundred miles into the interior of the State of Louisiana. . . . Here the emigrants were met by Elder James Brown, the agent appointed by the Church Authorities to receive and forward them

up to St. Louis. . . . As I wandered through the quaint, old-fashioned city, I saw many a familiar face that I had seen on board the *Jersey*, at a street restaurant, enjoying a moderate meal obtained for five cents. . . . Owing to the promptness of Elder Brown, the *John Simonds* steamboat was soon engaged for the passengers. The passage for adults was two and a quarter dollars.”

Concerning Nauvoo, Mr. Piercy recorded, “The distance from Keokuk to Nauvoo is twelve miles. The city is first seen from the top of the hill about two miles from Montrose. From this point the beauty of its situation is fully realized and one cannot wonder that Joseph Smith, as John Taylor says in his admirable song of the ‘Seer,’ ‘loved Nauvoo.’ It is the finest possible site for a city, and its present neglected state shows

how little a really good thing is sometimes appreciated. The first objects I saw, approaching the city, were the remains of what was once the temple, situated on the highest eminence of the city and which in the days of its prosperity must have been to it what the cap or stone is to a building. On the banks of the river lie broken blocks of stone and shattered bricks and the visitor’s first steps are over evidence of ruin and desolation. . . . (See cover and cover note, page 548.)

“While in Nauvoo I lodged at the Nauvoo Mansion, formerly the residence of Joseph Smith, and now occupied by his mother, his widow, and her family. I could not fail to regard the old lady with great interest. Considering her age and afflictions, she, at that time, retained her faculties to a remarkable degree. She spoke very very freely about her sons, and, with tears in her eyes, and every other symptom of earnestness, vindicated their reputations for virtue and truth. During my two visits I was able to take her portrait . . .”

About Carthage, the artist penned the following, “I felt very anxious to visit Carthage, and though, like Nauvoo, somewhat aside from the route, I considered that sketches of its jail would possess undying interest for tens of thousands, and concluded not to return without obtaining them. . . .”

“By accident I put up at the tavern to which the mutilated bodies of Joseph and Hyrum were taken from the jail. The landlord showed me the room where they were laid out.

(Continued on page 603)



Elk Horn River Ferry.



"Carthage jail," in Carthage, Illinois, about nine miles from Nauvoo.



"Well against which Joseph Smith was placed and shot at after his assassination."

"Room [in Carthage Jail] in which Joseph and Hyrum Smith were imprisoned." Of his visit Artist Piercy wrote: "The keeper was away and I was shown over it by a young girl. The holes made in the wall by the bullets still remained unstopped. The bullet hole in the door is that made by the ball which caused the death of Hyrum. . . ."

"Having seen the place and made my sketches I was glad to leave. Two lives unatoned for and 'blood crying from the ground,' made the spot hateful."



SEPTEMBER 1954

The IMPROVEMENT ERA



Council
Bluffs
Ferry—
1854



Brigham Young, drawn from life.

"Route From Liverpool to the West"

With Sketches and Descriptions of the Country

Fredrick Piercy

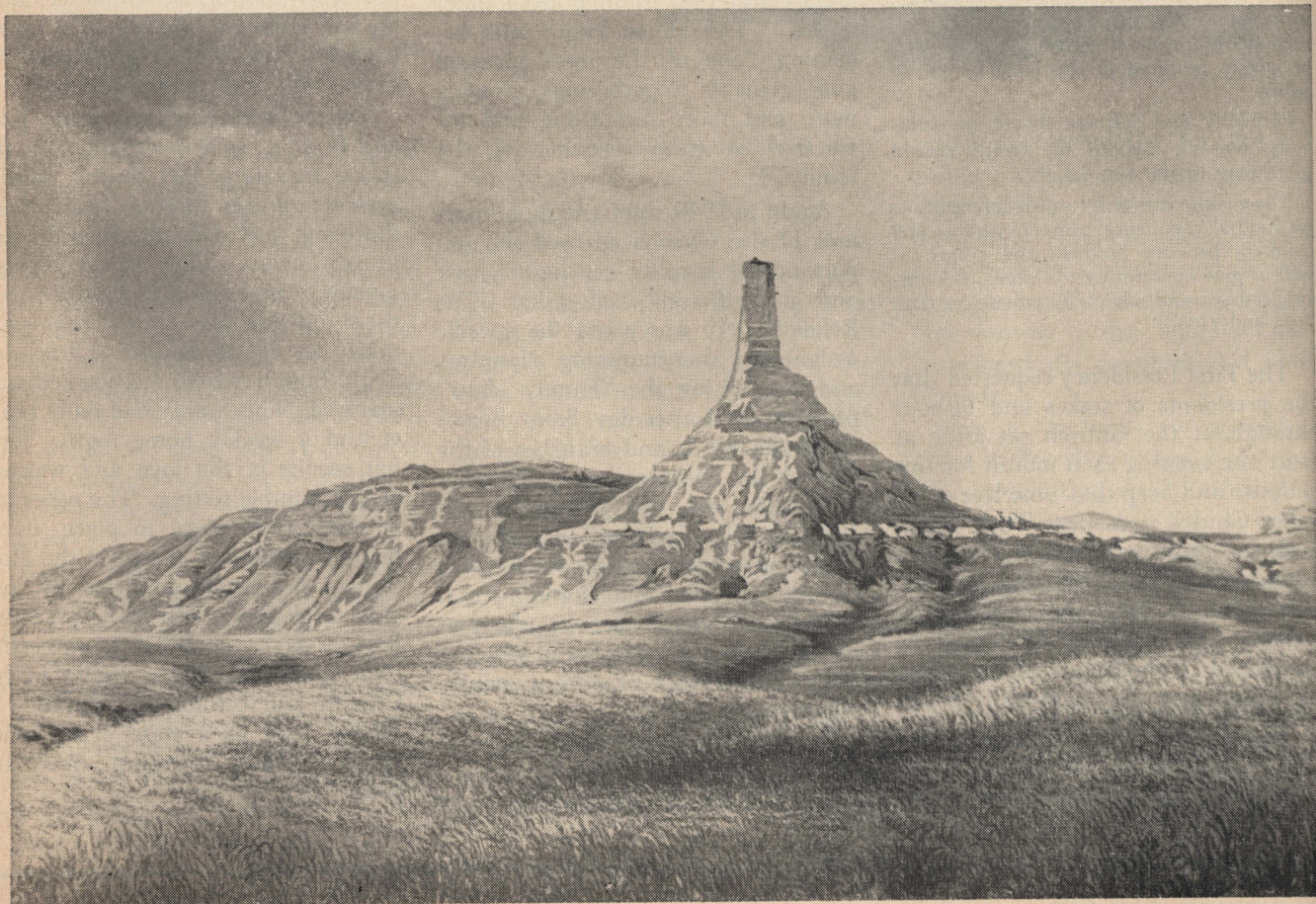
by Doyle L. Gray

CONCLUSION

AS YOUNG Artist Fredrick Piercy crossed the plains with a band of immigrants in 1853, making sketches of important places along the way to be published by Elder Franklin D. Richards in a book in England, he came in contact with the usual hardships and trials of pioneer life—Indians and buffalo, wind, rain, and mud, hot sand and burning sun, sickness, and death. Of these experiences he wrote briefly in his journal. But as his purposes were far different from those of the pioneers, he recorded other things also which may have been of passing interest only to them.

After having gone to Carthage and Nauvoo he had rejoined the com-

Chimney Rock.



Great Salt Lake Valley"

Accounts By —

Piercy

MANAGING EDITOR

pany at Kaneshville, and when they reached the Missouri River, twelve miles distant, he made the sketch of the "Council Bluffs Ferry and Group of Cottonwood Trees," which has been colored and used on this month's cover. Interestingly enough, a large steel and concrete structure called "The Mormon Pioneer Memorial Bridge," has been erected over the site of the crossing. In his journal Mr. Piercy wrote:

"The ferry-boats are flat-bottomed, and large enough to carry two wagons of the ordinary size. The starting point is usually chosen a considerable distance up the stream, so that the current may assist in conveying the boats to the landing place on the opposite side of the river. . . . The camping place on the west side of

Fort Laramie



- COUNTRIES IN UTAH
- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. WEBER | 8. JUAB |
| 2. DAVIS | 9. MILLARD |
| 3. DESERT | 10. SAN PETE |
| 4. GREEN RIVER | 11. IRON |
| 5. GREAT SALT LAKE | 12. WASHINGTON |
| 6. UTAH | 13. CARSON |
| 7. TOOELE | 14. SUMMIT |

Portion of map reproduced in the book "Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley" shows how Territory of Utah looked in 1854.

the Missouri was about a mile from the landing, in the vicinity of 2 springs, near the site of Winter Quarters. I paid a visit to the old place, and found that some person had set fire to the last house that remained of the once flourishing settlement."

The company crossed the Elk Horn River on June 13. Three days later

the young artist demonstrated that he could do other things than draw:

"A serious accident occurred to Henry Radnell. He got under his wagon to secure the tar bucket, and very carelessly left his right leg projecting outside the wheel. The team, left to itself, started on, and the

(Continued on following page)





Scott's Bluffs

Liverpool to the Great Salt Lake Valley

(Continued from preceding page)

wheel passed over his leg and broke it. Learning that something was the matter I hastened to the spot, and soon saw that if I did not do something for him his chance of getting his leg set was a very poor one. I therefore took the case in my own hands, and turned surgeon, although I had never before seen a broken limb. In the first place I screwed up my courage to the sticking place and bared both of his legs. I then took particular notice of the exact position

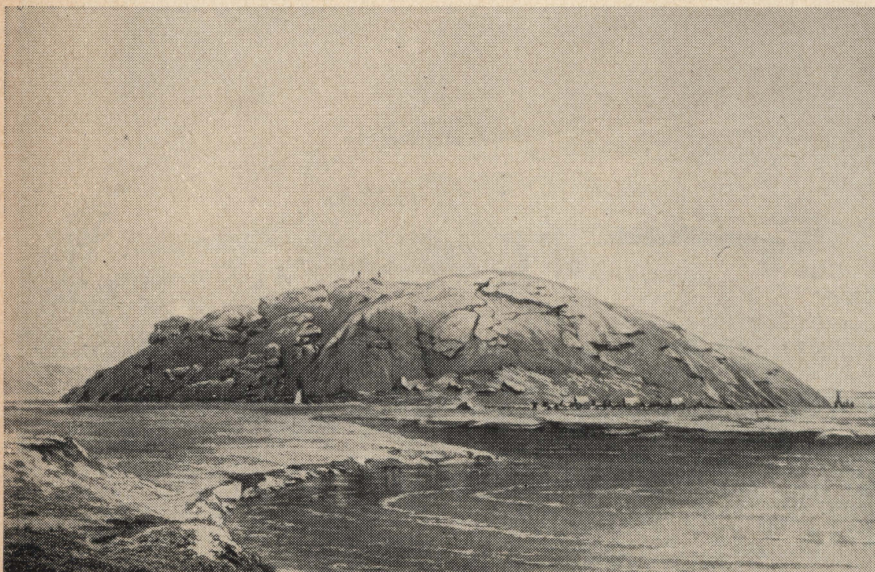
of the bones in the unbroken leg and the position of the foot, and placed the right leg and foot in exactly the same position, and kept them so by means of two boards which I nailed together. These, with the aid of thin sticks or splinters bound round the leg, with abundance of rag, seemed to answer the purpose. The continual jolting of the wagon rather retarded his recovery, but I am happy to say he got on very well."

Two days later, on June 18, Mr. Piercy again showed that he was more than a city dandy along for the ride, although it is evident that some members of the company tried to extend to him special privileges:

"Commenced our day's travel with the disagreeable knowledge that we should have to double team through a deep slough. It proved much worse than our fears, for with many of the wagons a triple team was necessary. The men were over their knees in mud, and how the ladies got through I don't know and hardly dare conjecture. Elder Miller recommended me to keep in the wagon as he thought the mules could pull me through, but when in the mudhole it was evident to me that if I remained in the wagon there we should stick, so into the mud and slush I jumped, and by plying the whip vigorously I got the team through. Once in the mud and thoroughly be-daubed I thought I had better make the best of it, so I borrowed an ox whip, which, with putting my shoulder to the wheel, gave me healthful and useful employment until all the wagons were through."

Neither was Mr. Piercy unmoved by seemingly little things. Even though his journal was very short, the loss of a silk handkerchief merited a paragraph:

"Monday, the 11th of July, while in camp I laid a silk handkerchief upon the grass, after washing it, expecting that the sun would dry it in a few minutes, but fortune ordained otherwise. My attention was suddenly attracted to the spot where I had left it by hearing a girl cry out—'O look'ee there! If there isn't a



Independence Rock

critter a eatin' something;' and sure enough there was, for that moment I saw the bright red corners of my best silk handkerchief vanish into a cow's throat. I learned that it was no uncommon thing for these animals to appropriate such delicate morsels."

Although he made forty-five drawings which were reproduced in the book, *Route From Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, there was one picture he wanted to paint along the way that proved to be a great disappointment to him. Of this he recorded:

"Wednesday, the 13th (July) In the guides there is a notice of a 'Lone Tree.' All through the journey the lone trees had been in my imagination until at last I had associated an interest, a sort of romantic idea, with it, which became quite exciting. I pictured to myself an old, weather-beaten, timeworn tree, standing in mournful solitude on a wide-spreading prairie, having to encounter alone the attacks of the elements, with no companion to share the storm, or help break its fury. I could imagine it on a cold winter's night with its arms bare of foliage, tossing them in sorrow in the wind, being desolate and alone. Even sunshine and re-



Devil's Gate

freshing showers must be melancholy pleasures to a lone tree, for do not they prolong its dreary isolation. I started off ahead of the company with the intention of making a compli-

mentary and therefore careful sketch of this tree, but I could not find it. Some unpoetical and ruthless hand had cut it down, so my hopes were

(Continued on following page)



Great Salt Lake

Liverpool to the Great Salt Lake Valley

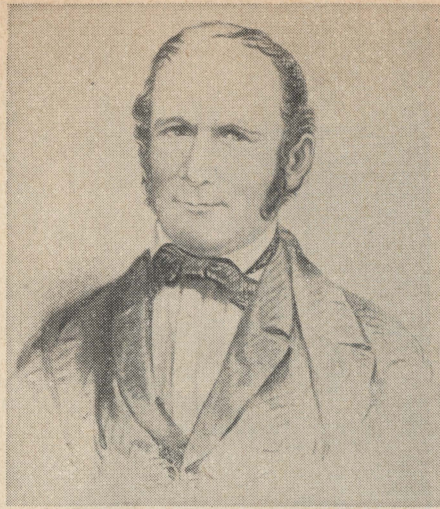
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blighted and my occupation was gone."

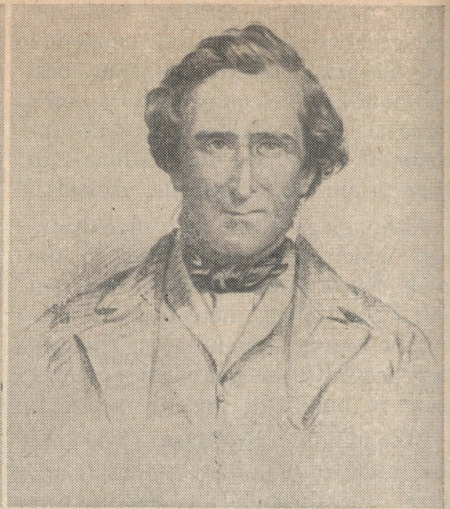
Landmarks of a more permanent nature along the trail gave the artist an opportunity to make use of his "occupation." His sketches of some of these are reproduced on these pages. He also made the following written descriptions:

"Saturday, the 16th (July) Travelled 13 miles and camped on the Platte. Chimney Rock in sight all day, and Scott's Bluffs in the evening. Chimney Rock is on the south side of the Platte, and on my journey home I made the accompanying sketch of it, engraved on steel, which is a view taken nearer by three miles than could be obtained from the north side.

"Monday, the 18th (July) In the morning met 27 Elders from Great Salt Lake Valley on missions. They informed us that they had had a quick and an agreeable trip so far. We spent half an hour with them, and then separated, they to the rising and we to the setting sun. Scott's



Heber C. Kimball



Jedediah M. Grant

Bluffs were in view all day. They were certainly the most remarkable sight I had seen since I left England. Viewed from the distance at which I sketch them the shadows were of an intense blue, while the rock illuminated by the setting sun partook of its gold, making a beautiful harmony of colour. They present a very singular appearance, resembling ruined palaces, castellated towers, temples and monuments. In the foreground of the engraving are seen some emigrants hunting the buffalo.

"Friday, 22nd (July) Traveled about nine miles over a good road to Fort Laramie, and sketched what little I could see of it, but not having time to cross the river, I was unable to obtain a complete view of it until my return, when I made that which is used in this work.

"Saturday, 30th (July) Left Grease Wood Creek, and stopped about an hour at the Alkali Lakes to obtain saleratus. . . . We then proceeded to the ford of Sweetwater, about a

(Continued on page 663)



Great Salt Lake City in 1853.

ROUTE FROM LIVERPOOL TO THE GREAT SALT LAKE VALLEY

(Continued from page 632)

mile beyond Rock Independence. Forded, and then, while the company were taking breakfast, I hurried back to the Rock and made a sketch of it. It is a large rounded mass of granite, on which are inscribed the names of many passing emigrants. At Devil's Gate, about four miles further, I remained behind to make a sketch of this great curiosity, after which, as my boots were without toes, and admitted the gravel, which cut one's feet dreadfully, I had some difficulty in catching up with the wagons."

His written narrative closes with the following :

"Tuesday, 9th (August) Commenced our journey this morning by getting our mules "mired" in one of the bad crossings of Kanyon Creek, and after many vain attempts to get them out, we at last succeeded by hitching Elder Bigler's horses to the wagon poles. The rest of the journey to the mouth of the Kanyon which opens into the Valley was desperate work, but we knew that there were warm friends ahead, and a hearty welcome for the travelworn, so we scrambled up the mountains, and thumped and bumped over the rocks, and splashed through the streams, till we surmounted all difficulties. Signs of civilization met the eye as we proceeded along. From away up the mountain sides we could hear the sound of the axe, and in the road, chewing the cud of patience, we saw the sturdy team waiting to transfer to the busy haunts of men, the foliage crowned monarchs of the solitude, perhaps then for the first time invaded. And now our journey, so full of interest and novelty to me, was nearly completed, and we were about to exchange the rude, but bracing and healthful, prairie life for the comfort and refinements of the city. Just before we turned the corner into the Valley we stopped at the creek, and having bathed and changed our clothing we at last entered as the sun was setting beyond the Great Salt Lake, a steel engraving of which is herewith given, and another five miles brought us to the City. Day's journey about thirty miles, making a total, according to the best accounts I could keep, of 7840 from Liverpool. . . .

"By the time we entered Great

Salt Lake City darkness had enveloped it, shutting out from my straining and inquiring eyes all details. I could see that the streets were broad, and hear the refreshing sound of water rippling and gushing by the road side. Occasionally a tall house would loom up through the gloom, and every now and then the cheerful lights came twinkling through the cottage windows—slight things to write about, but yet noticed with pleasure by one fresh from the Plains. A happy meeting with rela-

tives, and a few moments of wakefulness ended the 9th of August, and also ends my hastily sketched and simple narrative.

"P.S. While in the city, President Brigham Young, among other things favoured me with the opportunity of taking for publication the portrait of himself presented in this work. The portrait of President Heber C. Kimball, and that of the late President Willard Richards are from daguerreotypes by Mr. Cannon, which were kindly furnished by Elder S. W. Richards. . . . The view of the

(Concluded on page 665)



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Liverpool to the Great Salt Lake Valley

(Concluded from page 663)

City was taken with a camera lucida, from the "Bench," north of it, and just above President H. C. Kimball's house, which is seen in the foreground, a little to the left of East Temple (Main) Street. The site of the city is large, and at that early period the buildings were very much scattered, rendering it almost impossible to get any idea of the place unless a large area was embraced in the view. Consequently a favourable point was chosen, commanding the principal buildings, and the chief portion of the city which was then built upon. This, on the other hand very much reduced the size of the objects, but not to indistinctness. On the whole I think it may be presented as a faithful portrait of Great Salt Lake City in 1853."

The "camera lucida" the artist mentioned is defined as "an instrument which by means of a prism of a peculiar form, or an arrangement of mirrors, causes a virtual image of an external object to appear as if projected upon a plane surface as of paper or canvas, so that the outlines may be traced."

Nothing further is printed in the book about Artist Fredrick Piercy's stay in Great Salt Lake City, his trip back over the plains, or his ocean voyage back to England. Nor does there seem to be any record of him after the book was published. Perhaps someone who reads this can throw additional light on this talented young man who has left us such a rich heritage of drawings which he made a hundred years ago on his journey from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake City.

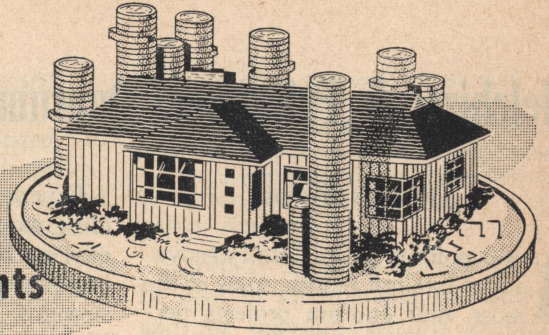
NEW TEACHER By MAY RICHSTONE

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be found
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ground.*

SEPTEMBER 1954

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