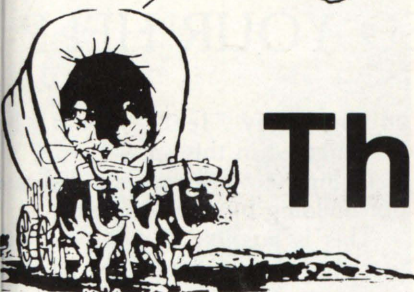


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# The PIONEER

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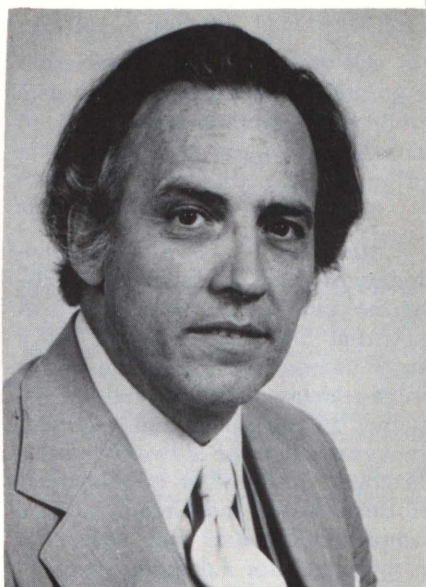


## THE GOLDEN ROAD

from Echo Canyon to the new headquarters, Sons of Utah Pioneers  
(The road is shown by dots. Diamonds indicate historic markers and places)

See page 11 for text.





*Dr. Stanley B. Kimball*

## THE GOLDEN ROAD! TO THE VALLEY 1848-1980

by Stanley B. Kimball

Located right on and above the famous Golden Road, an old Mormon emigrant trail which evolved into Hgy. 40 and Interstate 80, the new National Headquarters of the SUP is ideally located. From Headquarters one will be able to follow visually, at least, this old trail northwest down through Parley's Hollow, the Country Club, and Sugar House Park to its original beginning (or end) near 11th East and 21st South. (Vestiges of the original beginning of this canyon and trail as shown on the township surveys of 1856 are visible next to the K.O.'B. parking lot at this intersection.) From Headquarters this site can be spotted easily by looking for the aquamarine colored Redman Moving building, now vacant, at 1250 East 21st South.

Better yet, from Headquarters one may look along this old trail to the east right into the gaping throat of Parley's Canyon and at sunset may get a spectacular view of the aureate colored north face of this canyon wall from which derived originally the name, The Golden Road. (The name may also be connected with the gold seekers who used it.)

Basically this approximately 42 mile long emigrant trail is Hwy. 40 from Sugar House east to the Silver Creek Jct., then via Wanship, (continued on page 15)

## GOLDEN ROAD

*(continued from page 11)*

Hoytsville, and Coalville to the mouth of Echo Canyon. Up to 60,000 Mormon Pioneers plus additional thousands of soldiers, merchants, gold seekers, Californians, and assorted "Gentiles" came down Echo Canyon to the Weber River. Most turned north to present day Henefer and into the Valley via Emigration Canyon. But some, including almost every important visitor to Salt Lake City between 1862 and the coming of the railroad in 1869, turned south-down The Golden Road to the City of the Saints. (See map accompanying this article.)

Since the new Headquarters are right on this old road, the S.U.P. might very well exploit properly and fully this fortuitous circumstance. For example, the trail could become an annual run sponsored by the new Pioneer Trail Relay Chapter, the road could be more thoroughly researched, marked, written up, and publicized, and part of the S.U.P. Library could be devoted to it. Old maps of the trail could be framed and displayed. On the grounds of the trail could be framed and displayed. On the grounds of Headquarters an appropriate marker or monument could be placed telling the story of this old trail.

The Golden Road was born of Parley P. Pratt's desire to find an easier way into the Valley. His search commenced in late June, 1848, but it was not until the 1850 emigrant season that it was at all ready for travel. Pratt hoped, in vain, to recoup his time and money by collecting tolls. An ad in the third issue of the *Deseret News* (June 29, 1850) recommended his GOLDEN PASS! or, NEW ROAD THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS and listed his tolls which ranged from "1 cent per head of sheep" to "75 cents per conveyance drawn by two animals."

*(continued on page 17.)*

### **LARKIN MORTUARY**

260 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE

PHONE 363-5781

*Max Larkin-SLC Chapter, SUP*

*(continued from page 17)*

It is uncertain how extensively this route was used compared to the older trail through Emigration Canyon. I have recently read nearly 400 old pioneer journals and found but sixteen accounts of The Golden Road (and none of them referred to it by that name): three in 1850, three in 1861, three in 1862, three in 1863, and three in 1864. It appears that it fell into immediate disuse for over a decade after its first season. Three of these journals help explain why.

The earliest, by Mary Ann Maughan whose party negotiated this new road during August, 1850, recorded "We travelled the most dreadful road imaginable. Some places we had to make the road before we could pass. It is full of large rocks and stumps. Passed the toll gate and paid for passing over the road we had made...the road today has been the worst we ever saw." One month later Nelson W. Whipple recorded, "The road was almost impassable." Thereafter the road does not seem to have been improved much, for thirteen years later, during October, 1863, Elijah Larkin complained "The road was

dangerous on account of its being so narrow and very sloping in places.'"

There are several other reasons why the route declined: Pratt sold his interest to finance a mission to Chile, the new road was nine miles longer than the old, and tolls among fellow Mormons were unpopular, even resented.

Despite these problems, however, by 1862 The Golden Road was the preferred emigrant route into the Valley, especially after the Overland Stage began using it that year and it remained the main emigrant route to the coming of the railroad in 1869.

One of the best and earliest descriptions of this road is in the famous *Mormon Way-bill To The Gold Mines* (Salt Lake City, 1851). At the mouth of Echo Canyon, the guide explained, "The road forks, the left hand passes over two high mountains, the road is very rough." (Well emigrants were warned.)  
*(continued back page)*

**Deadline for next issue  
of the Pioneer  
is December 15, 1980**



The route was described thus:

#### LEFT HAND ROAD

To the crossing of Weber (at Chalk Creek or Coalville) - 5 miles;

From the crossing of Weber River to Dry Hollow (Rockpoint) -10 miles;

From Dry Hollow to Silver Creek - 6 miles;

Thence through a well-watered country - 8 miles;

Thence to the head of the Great Canyon (Mt. Dell) - 6 miles;

Thence down the canyon -6 miles;

Thence to Gov. Young's grist mill (near 23rd East) - 2 miles;

Thence to the Great Salt Lake City - 5 miles;

Following this old trail today (with one exception) is easy. Take the blacktop south from the village of Echo, going east of the Echo Reservoir, to Coalville. Here, at Chalk Creek, the old trail crossed the Weber River. Modern travelers must cross about 2.5 miles farther south. The old trail continued beyond the present-day Wanship south to Rockport and turned west

up Three Mile Canyon to Silver Creek and the present-day Silver Creek Jct. Modern travelers are advised to follow Interstate 80 from Wanship up Silver Creek to this same Jct. From the Silver Creek Jct. Interstate and Hwy. 40 follow the Golden Road quite closely into the Valley.

This old trail has been commemorated by at least four markers, three of which are extant today. The first (from the east) is at Hoytsville, a DUP marker to the Pioneer Trail and Grist Mill of 1862. The second is just north of Wanship on the black-top. Here the DUP; marked the Wanship Stage Coach Station built in 1861. The third is 2.7 miles west of the Silver Creek Jct. where the old rock Overland Stage Station itself still stands in good condition. Here there is a Utah Highway Historical Marker. This station was built by William Kimball, eldest son of Heber C. Kimball and many important visitors to Utah, including Mark Twain and Horace Greeley, stayed there. At one time there was another Utah Highway Historical

Marker at the mouth of Parley's Canyon, but it appears to have been removed when Interstate 80 was blasted through.

I suspect that henceforth on quiet evenings Sons may readily imagine Pioneer wagons and Overland stages rumbling down Parley's Hollow to the Crossroads of the West. Perhaps the SUP ought to acquire the hollow, possibly the only original bit of the Golden Road left and develop it historically and recreationally.

*[Editor's note: Dr. Kimball, Professor of History at Southern Illinois University, is historian of the Mormon Pioneer Trail Foundation. He has written three books on Mormon trails and members of the SUP who are interested in following these old trails may wish to consult his Discovering Mormon Trails, Deseret Book, 1979, \$4.95]*

<sup>1</sup>Several non-Mormon accounts of this route are given in J. Roderic Korns, "The Golden Road," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 19 (1951), pp. 224-247.