

REMINISCENCES OF THE JACKSON COUNTY MOB, THE EVACUATION OF NAUVOO, AND THE SETTLEMENT OF GREAT SALT LAKE CITY

AN ADDRESS BY ELDER GEORGE A. SMITH, DELIVERED TO THE CHILDREN WHO FORMED
THE PROCESSION AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE PIONEERS INTO GREAT
SALT LAKE VALLEY, DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE, GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, JULY 24, 1854

Reported by G. D. Watt

My Young Friends—It is with pleasure I rise to address you on the present occasion.

Having been called upon to walk in the Procession, as the Historian of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it created in my breast feelings not easily described; it brought up reminiscences of past scenes, and of celebrations similar to this, wherein I have acted in company with my worthy predecessor, Dr. Willard Richards, one of the First Presidency of the Church of God on earth, and one of the Pioneers who first entered this Valley. He has gone to rest, after being worn out by trials, persecutions, and adversities, and by the difficulties incident in the forming of this settlement in the Valleys of the mountains.

I could have stopped to drop a tear to the memory of departed worthies—the Historian, the aged Patriarch John Smith, and many others; at the same time, I could but feel joyful to see such an immense assembly, gathered together to commemorate the day on which the Pioneers first arrived in this region to inhabit these valleys.

Should we refer to the pages of the history that is no doubt written in many a private journal, our memories would be refreshed with the startling truth, that the first fifteen years of

our existence had been a continued scene of trials, persecutions, afflictions, and murders; including the murder of the Prophet, the Patriarch, and a great many others of the ablest and most energetic members of the Church.

At a Council of the leading men of this community in Nauvoo, it was concluded that on finishing the Temple there, a company of one thousand or fifteen hundred pioneers should establish themselves in the mountains, to prepare the way for a safe retreat from the tyranny and oppression which had so long followed this people. This conclusion was unknown to the public, hence the surprise of the mob at our willingness to depart.

In a very few days afterwards, bands of organized mobbers commenced the work of burning our houses in Yelrom, Green Plains, and Bear Creek settlements, and throughout the country. As if they were not satisfied with the destruction of the hundreds of lives their persecutions had already sacrificed, and the millions of property they had already destroyed in Missouri; as if dissatisfied with the blood of the Prophet still smoking from the ground as it were; they lighted anew the torch of the incendiary, and the Governor of the State was silently willing to fan its fires. It will be recollected that he