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# Exodus of 1847

Being a full and interesting account of the thrilling experiences of the Latter Day Saints journey, from their homes in the United States. to the unknown region of Mexico, where they built up what is known as the Salt Lake Valley, and unfurled the stars and stripes upon Ensign Peak.

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BY CHARLES W. CARTER.

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# THE EXODUS OF 1847.

**Being a full and interesting account of the thrilling experiences of the Latter-day Saints' journey from their homes in the United States, to the unknown region os Mexico, where they built up what is known as the Salt Lake Valley, and unfurled the stars and stripes upon Fnsign Peak,**

ORGANIZATION of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, took place in Peter Whitmer's house, Fayette, Seneca county, New York, on the 6thlof April, 1830, by six members, viz: Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Samuel H. Smith and David Whitmer. In January, 1831, a revelation was given, requiring all the Saints in the east to emigrate to Ohio, which was obeyed and where they built their first temple at Kirtland. The people were driven from Ohio, in 1838 and 1839, and passed to Missouri, there they underwent the same treatment as in Ohio, viz: imprisoned, scourged, persecuted, etc., their homes burned, goods confiscated, men, women and children, indiscriminately massacred, and finally driven from Missouri, by the exterminating order of Governor Boggs. The next refuge of the Saints was at Nauvoo There in 1839 and 1840, where the persecutions commenced again and on the 27th of June, 1844, at Carthage Jail the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum were killed. Here the Saints also built a temple at Nauvoo. Having decided to flee to the Rocky Mountains as a persecuted people, they commenced in February, 1846, to cross the Mississippi River, (at that time frozen) and to travel west, forming settlements at Garden Grove and

Mount Pisgah, Iowa. In July, 1846, Captain Allen called upon Brigham, to raise 500 men to go to Mexico, as a Mormon Battalion. The main body of the Saints settled in Nebraska, and established themselves at Winter Quarters, (near where Omaha now stands,) as a resting place and settlement where following Saints could recuperate.

As the spring opened the Mormons began to prepare for the journey to the Rocky Mountains, across the Great American Desert, as it was then called and the idea was sufficient to appal them. They had still over one thousand miles to travel, (as the one thousand mile tree in Weber Canyon, designates to us now one thousand miles to Omaha,) and yet the people had faith that their leaders would bring them safely to their destination, and the Mormons could not look forward to much of a land of promise to repay them for the past. Yet sang their poetess Eliza R. Snow:

"The time of winter now is o'er,
There's verdure on the plain;
We leave our sheltering once more,
And to our tents again."

On the 14th of January, 1847, this, the first revelation by President Young, was given to the people. "Let all the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and those who journey with them be organized into companies, with a covenant and promise to keep all the commandments and statutes of the Lord our God. Let the companies be organized with captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties, and captains of tens, with a president and counselor at their head. under the direction of the twelve apostles; and this shall be our covenant, that we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord. Let each company provide itself with all the teams, wagons, provisions and all other neccessaries for the journey that they can.

"When the companies are organized, let them go to with all their might, to prepare for those who are to tarry. Let each company, with their captains and presidents decide how many can go in the spring; then choose out a sufficient number of able-bodied and expert men to take teams, seed and farming utensils to go as pioneers to prepare for putting in the spring crops. Let each company bear an equal proportion, according to the dividend of their property, in taking the poor, the widows and the fatherless, and the families of those who have gone with the battalions, that the cries of the widow and the fatherless come not up into the ears of the Lord against his people. Let

each company prepare houses and fields for raising corn for those that are to remain behind this season; and this is the will of the Lord concerning this people. Let every man use his influence and property to remove this people to a place where the Lord shall locate a Stake of Zion, and if ye do this with a pure heart, with all faithfulness, ye shall be blessed in your flocks, and in your herds, and in your fields and in your houses, and in your families. Seek ye, and keep all your pledges one with another, and covet not that which is thy brother's. Keep yourselves from evil, take not the name of the Lord God in vain; for I am the Lord your God, even the God of your fathers,—the God of Abraham. Isaac and of Jacob "I am he who led the children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt and my arm is stretched out in the last days to save my people Israel." * * Have I not delivered you from enemies, only in that I have left the witness of my name? Now therefore, hearken, Oh ye people of my church, and ye elders listen together. You have received my kingdom; be diligent in keeping the commandments, lest judgment come upon you and your faith fail you, and your enemies triumph over you." Amen and Amen.

April 5th, 1847, Heber C. Kimball moved out four miles from Winter Quarters, with six teams and formed a nucleus to which the company of pioneers could gather.

April 14th. 1847. Brigham Young left Winter Quarters and joined Heber C. Kimball, near the Elkhorn river, 28 miles.

April 16th, 1847, the Pioneer Company was organized. It consisted of 73 wagons, 143 men, three women and two children. (The children's names were Rabriski Young and Perry Decker.) Total 148 souls. The names of the ladies were Clara Decker Young, (one of the wives of Brigham) her mother, and Ellen Sanders, one of the wives of Heber C. Kimball.

Brigham issued general orders to the company. They were to travel in a compact body; every man to carry his gun loaded, the locks to be shut on a piece of Buckskin, with caps ready in case of danger; with flints locks, cotton and powder flasks to be handy, (at that time they were nearly all flint locks, as the percussion had only lately been invented) every man to walk by the side of his wagon, under orders not to leave it, unless by order of the officer in command. The wagons to be formed two abreast, where practicable, with Cromwell's famous order "Trust in God, but keep your powder dry." At bugle call at 5 a. m., the pioneers were to arise, assemble for prayers, get breakfast and be ready to start at 7 a. m. At night at 8:30

when the bugle sounded each one was to retire to his wagon for prayers, and to bed at 9:30 p. m.

Each fifty was provided with a blacksmith and a wagon-maker, with tools for repairing and shoeing. Three hundred pounds of breadstuff to carry for each person, and one hundred rounds of ammunition for each man. Every wagon load and team was inspected. A strict guard was kept over the cattle night and day. Pigs and poultry were carried in coops attached to the wagons, then there had to be a water barrel and a sack at the back to collect buffalo chips (as these had to be used for cooking in the absence of wood.) No person was allowed to wander about not even to hunt game. Saturday afternoon was usually occupied in washing, baking, repairing wagons and shoeing animals, and Sunday was a day of rest and worship.

About the 1st of May, 1847, the Mormons had their first buffalo hunt, killing four cows, three bulls, and five calves.

While hunting several days after, the hunters were called in, as about four hundred Indian warriors near by had shown signs of an attack they had previously been threatening, and had set fire to the praire grass on the north side of the Platte. The Pioneers fired their cannon twice to let the Indians know they were on the watch. (This old cannon was on exhibition at Saltair, Pioneer day, 1896.) A council was now held to consider whether to cross the river and strike the old road to Laramie, there being good grass on that side, while the Indians were burning it on the north.

In view, however, of the thousands who would follow in their track, it was decided to brave the Indians and the burning prairie, for, said Brigham Young: A new road will thus be made which will be a permanent route for the Mormons, independent of the old route, and the river Platte will separate the Mormon companies from other emigrants, so that they will not quarrel about wood, grass or water, and fresh grass will soon grow for the other companies of Mormons that follow us this season.

Thus the Pioneers broke a new road across the plains over which thousands of Mormons traveled until 1869, or until the Union Pacific R. R., was built, and it was strange that the Union Pacific should have their grade for hundreds of miles over this same old Mormon road.

The Pioneers, post offices, or message holders were very unique, viz: Bleached buffalo skulls on which they would write the date when they left the place where the skulls were, also, so and so "all's well," or any other remark. For years the bleached

buffalo bones were made the news agents of the Mormon emigrants. The daily paper of to day is not read with so much eagerness as were those dry bones on the plains, telling of family and friends gone before.

When the weather permitted Orson Pratt took astronomical observations determining by the aid of the sextant and circle of reflection, the latitude and longtitude of the most prominent places, the changes of elevation above sea level, etc.

William Clayton and Willard Richards, had invented an apparatus by which they could tell the distance traveled each day.

Brigham Young went in advance to find the best route, as thousands of other Mormons would follow in the very footprints of the Pioneers.

Some days they would see as many as 50,000 buffalo. They came to a hunting ground of the Sioux where five hundred wigwams had stood. About one thousand warriors had encamped there, acres of ground were covered with buffalo wool and other remains of the slaughter. No wonder the Indians bemoan their hunting grounds, now lost to them forever.

Several days after they met a great number of Indians and got their cannon now on wheels ready.

On Sunday, the 23rd of May, 1847, the Pioneers could see Chimney Rock. Here they held their usual Sabbath service, Erastus Snow preached, followed by Brigham Young. Brigham said, he had never seen a people more united, and promised them that they should pluck the fruit of this mission to all eternity. He was well satisfied with himself and with all the pioneers. He was leading them, and to the praise of all, he would say, that not a man of them would refuse to obey his counsel.

June 1st, 1847. This was Brigham Young's birthday, he was then 46 years old. On this day the Pioneers reached Fort Laramie, 572 miles from Omaha. Altitude, 7,123 feet.

Here they were joined by a small company of 14 Mormons, with seven wagons who had wintered at Pueblo, and reported that a detachment of the Mormon battalion would leave Pueblo, for Fort Laramie and follow the Mormon track.

June 2nd, President Young and others visited Fort Laramie, then occupied by 38 persons, mostly French.

Mr. Burdow the principal man at the Fort was a Frenchman, who cordially received the Pioneers and loaned them a flat bottomed boat, on reasonable terms to assist them in ferrying the Platte.

June 3rd, the Pioneers crossed the north fork of the river, having traveled on the left bank of the Platte, from Elkhorn to that point. A lady states, that east of the Fort a number of Soux Indians mixed with our camp, we lost a few cooking utensils, but one of the wagons breaking down, we had to remain to repair it, until late in the evening. It was a bright moonlight night and as we passed the Indian encampment, they came out whooping and shaking their blankets trying to stampede the teams, but did not succeed. One day a company of Indians met us and manifested a desire to trade, which we were glad to do, but, as the brethren were exchanging corn for buffalo robes, the squaws were stealing everything they could lay their hands on, many bake kettles and frying pans were missing that night. While the trading was going on, one Indian took a great fancy to my little girl who was sitting on my knee, and wanted to buy her, offering me a pony. I told him no trade. "Me give you two!" "No." "Me give three!" and then be brought the fourth, and gave me to understand they were all good, and that the last one was the best to chase buffalo. The situation was becoming embarassing when several of our company coming near dispersed the crowd of Indians.

June 4th, 1847, they commenced the ascent to the Black Hills.

June 12th, 1847, Brigham Young called together the officers to consult on a plan to recross the river Platte, from its south side to the north. They decided to take teams to the mountains adjacent and haul poles for the purpose of making a raft, which they did. They had to lash from two to four wagons abreast, to keep them from capsizing. A party of Missouri emigrants also were taken across the river by the Mormons, who received $1.50 for each wagon and load, being paid in flour at $2.50 per hundred. At that time flour was worth at that point $10. This flour was divided equally among them and was five and one half pounds for each man. These few pounds of flour was the means of saving the lives of some of the pioneers, for they were at this time entirely destitute of the staff of life. It looked, says Wilford Woodruff, as much of a miracle to me to see our flour and meal bags replenished in the Black Hills, as it did to have the Children of Israel fed with manna in the wilderness. (And the writer of this who crossed the plains in 1864, recollects that he was offered one dollar per pound in gold for each pound of flour that could be spared to emigrants. There could not much be spared, but they received a few pounds.) The Pioneers were seven days crossing the river at this point. While here, they established a ferry and selected nine men to take charge of it, who

were to come with the next company. This was about 124 miles west from Fort Laramie.

Another company under the leadership of John Taylor, with about 575 wagons had left Winter Quarters and crossed the Elk-horn river for journeying west, on the 19th of June, 1847.

June 16th, 1847, Captain Brown's detachment of Mormon battalion reached Fort Laramie, from Pueblo, and continued the following day westward, intending, if possible, to overtake the Pioneers who had passed twelve days before. The Pioneers reached Independence Rock on the 21st of June, 1847, and the South Pass on the 26th. Erastus Snow states that at the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, mountain fever appeared among us Ezra T. Benson being the first attacked, on the 27th of June. Nearly one-half of the entire company had this malady before we reached the valley of the Great Salt Lake, and among the number was Brigham Young. I, myself had a severe attack from which I recovered in about a week. This affliction detained us, so that with the labor on the roads, which were very rocky through the Wasatch Mountains, delayed us considerable.

June 27th, 1847, the Pioneers crossed the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains.

June 28th, 1847. On this day, they met with old Jim Bridger, (after whom Fort Bridger was named.) He considered it imprudent to bring many people to Salt Lake valley, until it could be ascertained that grain could be raised there. So sanguine was he that it could not be done, that he stated that he would give one thousand dollars in gold, for the first bushel grown there. Jack Robinson also lived there, and were trappers together. 1865. Jack used to live in a wigwam with a couple of squaws. In 1853, President Young purchased from Jim Bridger, about 30 square miles of land, which was afterwards known as Fort Bridger. It then passed into the hands of Louis Robinson, and in 1865, Colonel Mills then commanding, had a map made of the post in which this legend was printed. "Bought from Louis Robinson a Mormon, for the government of the United States, but never paid for." The reservation was ten miles each way, in 1865, and as the soldiers could only get one drink a day, they had to travel over ten miles if they wanted any more, so the Colonel had a wooden horse made, and inscribed on the body in red letters, was, Burn's Muddy and Millersville,. The soldier would be sentenced to sit on this horse, holding a sword stick painted at the point, red, and there he had to sit; blowing or snowing, all the same, from one day to four, according to his sentence.

June 30th, 1847, at Green river, Samuel Brannan, who had

taken the first colony of Mormons, on board the ship Brooklyn, to California, from New York, (February 4th, 1846,) met the Pioneers, and reported to Brigham Young, from the company at the Bay of San Francisco, that they had established a settlement there, and had already started a newspaper. This was the first newspaper printed in California.

The Pioneers were several days fording the Green River, and they celebrated their fourth of July there. The Mormon battalio now began to reinforce the Pioneers, for thirteen of these discharged soldiers joined them at Green River, retiring from the service of their country, and reported that a company of 140 men, under Captain Brown, were within seven days drive. Their term of service had expired, having enlisted for twelve months in July, 1846.

As the Pioneers approached the valley of the Great Salt Lake, the interest became intense. The gold finders of California, and the founders of the Pacific States and territory generally, had but a fever for precious metals, or were impelled westward by the emigrating spirit of the American people. But, these Mormon pioneers were seeking a new home, and their thoughts and emotions as they drew near the Salt Lake Valley, were akin to those of the pilgrim fathers, as they came in sight of Plymouth Rock.

President Young, at this time was sick of the mountain fever.

After passing Bear River, it was decided that Orson Pratt should take a company of 23 wagons and 42 men, and precede the main company of pioneers into Salt Lake Valley. This company left the main body July 13th, at the head of Echo canyon. Erastus Snow says: that the mountain fever detained us, so that with the labor on the roads through the Wasatch Range, we were unable to reach the Salt Lake Valley until the 21st of July, 1847.

When Orson Pratt and myself, who were exploring, first emerged into the valley and visited the site of the future Salt Lake City, and when we ascended Red Butte, near the mouth of Emigration Canyon, which gave us the first glimpse of the blue waters of the Great Salt Lake, we simultaneously swung our hats and shouted, "Hosannah!" For the spirit told us that here the Saints should find rest. Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow rode to the mouth of the canyon, descended into the valley, made a circuit of about 10 miles, and returned to camp about 9 p. m.

July 22nd, the advance company entered the valley and camped on City Creek canyon creek.

July, 23rd. The advance camp changed their place of

encampment, to where the Joint City and County Building now stands. Orson Pratt called the camp together, dedicated the land to the Lord, entrea'ed his blessings on the seeds about to be planted, and on the labors of the Saints in the valley. The camp was organized for work. The first ground was broken with a plow by William Carter, and the company began to irrigate.

President Young and party encamped at the west foot of Little Mountain, July 24th. President Young entered great Salt Lake Valley and joined the main body of Pioneers, at 2 p. m. Not a member of the company had died, since leaving Winter quarters, April 5th, 1847.

A few passages from the diary of President Woodruff, (who is 90 years old now,) will give the reader some idea of the entrance of the Pioneers into the valley.

"July 20th, 1847. We started early this morning, and stopped for breakfast, after a 5 miles drive. I carried Brother Brigham in my carriage. The mountain fever was still on him, but he stood the ride well. After breakfast we traveled over ten miles of the worst road of the whole journey.

"July 21st, compelled to lay over in consequence of the sick.

"July 23rd, we left East Canyon; reached the summit of the mountain, and descended six miles through a thick timbered grove. We nooned at a beautiful spring, in a small birch grove. Here we were met by Brothers Pack and Matthews, from the advance camp, they brought us word that they had explored the valley as far as possible, and chosen a spot to put in crops.

"July 24th, 1847. This is one of the most important days of my life, and in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. After traveling six miles through a deep ravine, ending with the canyon, we came in full view of the valley of the Great Salt Lake, the land of promise, held in reserve by God, as a resting place for his Saints. We gazed in wonder and admiration upon the vast valley before us, with the waters of the Great Salt Lake glistening in the sun, mountains towering to the skies, and streams of pure water running through the beautiful valley. It was the grandest view that we had ever seen, till that moment. Pleasant thoughts ran through our minds at the prospect, that, not many years hence, the house of God would be established in the mountains, and exalted above the hills; while the valleys would be converted into orchards, vineyards and fruitful fields. Cities erected to the name of the Lord, and the standard of Zion unfurled, for the gathering of nations.

"President Young expressed his entire satisfaction at the appearance of the valley as a resting place, and felt amply repaid for his journey. While lying upon his bed in my carriage. gazing upon the scene before him, many things of the future concerning the valley were shown to him in vision.

"After gazing awhile upon the scenery, we moved four miles across the table land, into the valley. The advance camp had pitched upon the banks of two small streams of pure water, and had ploughed about five acres of land, and planted potatoes. As soon as our camp was formed before, taking my dinner, having a half bushel of potatoes, I planted, them hoping to save at least the seed for another year.

"The Pioneers had dammed up one of the creeks and dug a trench, and by night, the ground which was very dry was irrigated. Towards evening a few of us rode several miles up City Creek Canyon, into the mountains, to look for timber and see the country We were caught in a thunder shower, and it rained over nearly the whole valley. We were very glad of this, as it was the opinion that it did not rain here during the summer."

How well this arrival of the pioneers into the Land of Promise, illustrates the character of the Mormon people. Empire founding on their first day here, planting their fields, before rest or dinner.

July 26th, 1847, President Young and others, ascended the peak, now known as Ensign Peak, and placed the Stars and Stripes thereon

August 22nd, 1847, it was decided to call the new townsite in the valley. "The City of the Great Salt Lake."

August 26th, 1847, Brigham Young. with a party of the pioneers, left Salt Lake to return to Winter Quarters, arriving there on the 31st of October, 1847.

February 2nd, 1848.by the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Upper California, including Utah, was ceded to the United States.

The organization by Act of Congress, of the Territory of Utah, in 1850, went into effect in 1851.

The Pioneers had accomplished a most wonderful journey, the whole country at that time, between Winter Quarter and Salt Lake Valley, being a trackless wilderness. Truly the escape from indiscriminate slaughter of the gallant little band, seems bordering on the miraculous to all acquainted with the circumstances. The fact, that the country they entered was swarming with murderous savages; that they did not aggregate in number of fighting men, more than the strength of

two or three lodges of Indians, who seldon moved in bodies of less than a score of lodges. That they could not avoid crossing the main trail; that in case of attack they were far beyond the reach of succor, if, even military protection was accessible.

The intrepidity and sacrifices of the Pioneers have given inspiration to legendary song, and added some of the most thrilling chapters to the history of the march of civilization on the American continent, but may well be doubted whether an enterprise was ever undertaken of a more desperately daring character, than this one, requiring in its accomplishment a greater exhibition of personal courage, and invincibility of spirit. Such, however, has been the general character, such the usual experience of the American pioneer.

Those who know not how to "do and dare," are not qualified for such a mission. From the first peopling by civilized men, of the American continent, down to the present, the advance of American civilization, has been accomplished almost through personal heroism.

The arrival of the Pioneers in the valley, viz: the 24th of July, 1847, was on Saturday. The next day Sunday was observed, and was a Sabbath indeed. "We shaved and cleaned up," says Wilford Woodruff," and met in the circle of the encampment. In the afternoon the whole congregation partook of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Orson Pratt, and Geo. A. Smith, preaching the first public discourse in the valley, and here were these pioneers of Mormonism, in a valley circled by a chain of mountains, nearly 5000 feet above the sea level."

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February 18th, 1897, the joint session of the Utah Legislature was called to order by speaker Perkins, at 7:45.

Governor Heber M. Wells was introduced, (who is a descendant of the illustrious Thomas Wells, fourth governor of Connecticut.) Governor Wells welcomed the visitors from Omaha in a brief address, in which he referred to Utah, as the Bee Hive State, but said, although the people of Utah were as busy as bees, they were never to busy too welcome and entertain the visitor at our gates. He said, he was heartily in sympathy with the idea of an exposition at Omaha, and thought it was time that the states west of the Mississippi were making a showing, and no longer hiding their light under a bushel. They should all join at Omaha, and when the signal was given, kick the bushel off it, and if it don't give those people of the East a bad case of the blind staggers, then I am much mistaken.

After referring to the great possibilities of such an expos-

ition, in showing to the East and the world the resources of the great West, he referred to the fact, that Utah owed a duty to her own Pioneer Jubilee, but he asserted, in reference to the Omaha exposition, I am in favor of an appropriation.

He then introduced G. M. Hitchcock, the manager, who said, that the idea of the exposition was first advanced by Hon. Wm. J. Bryan. It received a hearty second from the Hon. George Q. Cannon, who was a delegate to the Trans-Mississippi congress at that time, in Omaha, in November, 1895. Mr. Clement Chase, stated that the exposition was going to be held near the site of the last resting place of Brigham Young and the pioneers, that they occupied before starting on that long journey, to the now beautiful State of Utah, but at that time the great unknown West.

So let Utah make a royal bequest to Omaha for its forth coming exposition, for they are inseparably connected, and in the vicinity of the old Winter Quarters, Kanesville, Florence, etc., are the graves of many hundreds of Mormons.

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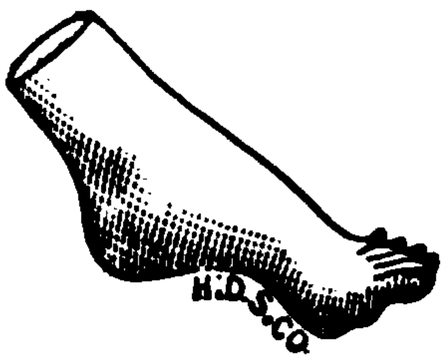
Reader; consider the wonderful progress made in the West by this famous exodus, in the brief space of fifty years. The Mormons made it possible to settle in California, (where they published the first paper.) Utah was its half-way station. Then came the settling of Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho, Montana and Arizona Omaha was only an Indian reservation in 1847. Then Utah was deprived of some of its territory, the people, or territory was too good, or not good enough for Utah. For instance, Green River, 200 miles east, was given to Wyoming, and Bear Lake Valley to Idaho.

The settling of Utah, in years to come will be considered the greatest achievement in the history of pioneering, and the Mormons will get their due. In the Royal Regiment of British artillery, in which I served from 1849 to 1862, they had inscribed on the buttons of the tunic, "Ubique" (meaning everywhere.) The regiment was stationed everywhere. it is about 70,000 strong. I expect this pamphlet to go everywhere, for they are all talking of Utah.

Lindlay Murray, who composed your principal grammar was a British soldier, and had to do most of his writing on his iron bedstead. My next will be the stirring events that have occured since 1847, so that you will get a concise history of Utah in a cheap form, which you can have bound.

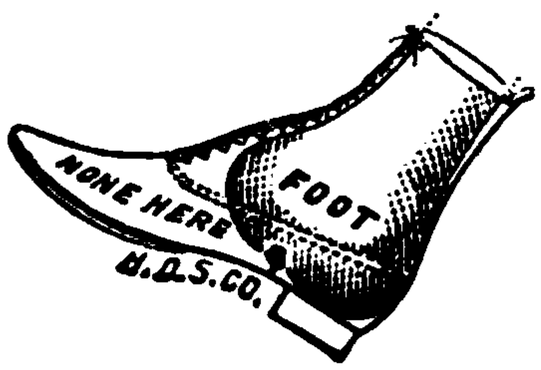
Yours respectfully,

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