

JUANITA BROOKS

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THE JUANITA BROOKS LECTURE SERIES

presents

The 27th Annual Lecture

Southern Paiute Relations
With Their Early Dixie
Mormon Neighbors

by Edward Leo Lyman

St. George Tabernacle

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Juanita Brooks was a professor at [then] Dixie College for many years and became a well-known author.

She is recognized, by scholarly consent, to be one of Utah's and Mormondom's most eminent historians. Her total honesty, unwavering courage, and perceptive interpretation of fact set more stringent standards of scholarship for her fellow historians to emulate. Dr. Obert C. and Grace Tanner had been life-long friends of Mrs. Brooks and it was their wish to perpetuate her name through this lecture series. Dixie State College and the Brooks family express their thanks to the Tanner family.

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Edward Leo Lyman received a Bachelor's Degree in History from Brigham Young University in May 1966 and a Master of Science Degree in History from the University of Utah, June 1967. He began teaching history at North High School in Riverside, California that year and continued there until 1984, serving ten years as the department chair. In 1982 he began teaching part time at California Polytechnic University and then added a similar assignment at California State

University, San Bernardino, both until 2003. At the same time, he was a full-time instructor at Victor Valley College from 1984 until 2005, also serving as department chairman. In 1981 he completed a Ph.D. at the University of California, Riverside.

Dr. Lyman has published extensively in Western History. In 1986, the University of Illinois Press published his work *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood*. In 1996, Signature Book published *San Bernardino: The Rise and Fall of a California Community*. With Linda Newell, he published *A History of Millard County* as part of the Utah Centennial Series sponsored by the Utah Historical Society (1999). In 2009 the University of Utah Press published *Amasa Mason Lyman: Mormon Apostle and Apostate, A study in Dedication*. These are four of his nine books and he is working on three more. In addition to books, he has published 30 academic articles and chapters in others' books.

Three awards have been given to Leo Lyman: 1) The Leonard J. Arrington Award for a Distinctive (Lifetime) Contribution to the Cause of Mormon History by the Mormon History Association in 2008, 2) Best article in the Field of Mormon History by MHA in 1989, and 3) the Reese History Award for the Most Scholarly Exposition in the Field of Mormon History (Dissertation) in 1983.

Southern Paiute Relations With Their Early Dixie Mormon Neighbors

By Edward Leo Lyman

This paper will focus primarily on events in local history during the Utah Dixie community's first two dozen years. First we will examine some aspects of the often lesser-known interaction and relations of the early Latter-day Saints in the region with their Native American neighbors. Then we will consider a few of the other developments and episodes of the Dixie area on toward maturity of the settlements, with some of the information being drawn from research for a biography recently written about my great great grandfather, Amasa M. Lyman, who proved more instrumental in the founding of Dixie than has been heretofore known. And finally, I will recount the tragic story of the death of one of the most popular and prominent citizens of the community, Franklin B. Woolley, in 1869.

The Tonaquint band of Southern Paiutes, who had engaged in crop cultivation for years prior to the coming of the Mormons, were some of the first people among whom the famous Mormon missionary, Jacob Hamblin, a literal apostle to the Indians,¹ was called to labor. Some of their headmen had previously requested, through early church explorer of the region, John D. Lee, that Latter-day Saint colonists settle among them.² Hamblin and other members of the Southern Indian Mission commenced their labors at Harmony (where Washington County was also first organized) in 1854.

On a visit not long thereafter, on June 10, 1854, Hamblin, along with the original mission leader, Rufus C. Allen, and Augustus P. Hardy and Thales Haskell, both of whom long remained missionaries among southern Utah Native

Americans, and four other elders, traveled from an initial visit with Chief Toquer and his people near where a town was later named for him, on westward to the Santa Clara River. They were met some seven miles from the river, perhaps near present Washington, by Tutsegabits, the head chief of all Southern Paiutes in the area, and two associates. This headman would be a firm, lifelong friend to the missionaries, serving later Mormon missions himself among the Apache and Navajo. The Latter-day Saint elders soon observed several villages of the Tonaquint band along the Santa Clara, featuring a diversion dam and ditch $3/4$ mile long bringing irrigation water to the series of small wheat, bean and corn fields. The missionaries exchanged indications of friendship with up to 250 Native Americans they encountered within several days (estimates ranged as high as 800 persons then residing along the full length of the Santa Clara). Despite language barriers, which both groups strived to overcome as promptly as possible, the head chief quickly grasped the meaning of the visit and explained its benefits to his Tonaquint fellows in an hour-long speech at a council between his people and the missionaries.³ After a visit of a week, a half dozen missionaries returned to Harmony by way of Mountain Meadows, leaving Jacob Hamblin and William Henefer at the villages along the Santa Clara, continuing to establish what proved to be the Dixie branch of the mission. Hamblin later brought his family from Tooele and with other missionaries, assisted by an often-generous supply of provisions primarily from Cedar City and Parowan, continued to develop this mission station.

Later, with Haskell, Ira Hatch, Samuel Knight and others, they built a mission cabin, then helped the Tonaquints construct or rebuild a diversion dam one hundred feet long, fourteen feet high and commenced not only cooperatively farming a hundred acre field with the Native Americans, but commenced building Dixie's first non-Indian town, Santa Clara.⁴ Hamblin noted from the outset being greatly

impressed with the Native American commitment to cooperating and their diligence in performing their share of the labor. After a relatively good harvest in 1855, there was a crisis the next year. As Hamblin recorded in his diary, Tonaquint leaders chided the lead missionary that their corn was dying despite his promises. The Indians affirmed belief that the Mormons could effectively petition to God for rain. Hamblin and others would soon successfully do so, but in the meantime he also requested his "white brethren to let the Red brethren have what [irrigation] water there was to water their corn; to which they readily consented."⁵ However, matters did not go as well the ensuing season. The lumbering industry being developed at Pine Valley loomed as the problem despite Hamblin's "remonstrances." He expressed surprise and disappointment at the course of men who were supposed to be his mission associates in teaching the Indian, who were instead tending to "rob [the Tonaquints] of [their irrigation] water" near the headwaters of the Santa Clara. The mission leader "came out against such a course, which offended them much," but obviously did not alter their selfish behavior.⁶ Indeed, it essentially pointed toward numerous future instances of similar disregard for the interests of the original inhabitants of the valley.

As in other settlements, Brigham Young directed the residents of Santa Clara to erect a fort, which soon resulted in a sturdy rock structure. In the spring of 1857, Apostle Amasa M. Lyman, traveling back to Utah from his completed mission assignment at San Bernardino, followed a Native American guide and one other companion, mail carrier David Savage, from Beaver Dam Wash over Mount Jarvis, reaching the Santa Clara mission the next morning. He preached to the missionary families and probably some Tonaquints, the first Latter-day Saint general authority to do so in Dixie. When he reached Salt Lake City a week later, he lavished considerable praise upon both the missionaries, their Native American companions and their fort, also reporting that "an

excellent feeling existed among the Indians and [that] Brother Hamblin has great influence among them." He contrasted the contented, well-fed and adequately clothed Santa Clara Native Americans with the nearby Las Vegas Paiutes, who had recently rejected a similar mission and were hungry, almost to the point of starvation. The differences were an eloquent tribute to the Dixie elders and to the industry of members of the Tonaquint band.

The day after Elder Lyman's visit to Santa Clara, he also visited the first pioneers to reach what became Washington City. The Samuel Adair company had just arrived on April 15 from Payson. As they had passed through Parowan, Apostle George A. Smith addressed them, probably warning them of the challenging environment they were seeking to tame. Lyman found the group camping in a sandy area on the south bank of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Virgin River, a location that respected city historian Andrew Karl Larson later found mystifying since "it was removed from any good culinary water so necessary in any settlement." Lyman clearly saw matters similarly and promptly directed them to relocate north of the creek, near some good natural springs. The colonists followed his advice and the town of Washington was thus founded and remained where he designated it to be.⁷ Elder Lyman continued to be close to the community, visiting it a half dozen other times in the ensuing three years, even owning property there for a time (from 1860 to about 1863). He later prophesied of the city's ultimate success and high status.⁸

When the second church apostle to visit Dixie, George A. Smith, for whom St. George would soon be named, arrived later in the summer of 1857, he noted thirteen different Tonaquint corn fields along the Santa Clara River. He also commented that Jacob Hamblin and his associates were "doing much for the benefit of Indians." Hamblin later recalled these Native American neighbors had accepted the challenge to work for a living and also "promised to be honest." They indeed agreed to abide by a code which stipulated that anyone

who stole would either pay the full price for the item taken or would be punished by fellow Paiutes — with Hamblin sometimes prescribing the severity. In the first years there was little, if any, stealing. They also appeared to be fully embracing the Latter-day Saint religious instructions and for a time even referred to themselves as "Paiute Mormons."

However, after a notable attempt to incorporate and follow missionary precepts and live as exemplary church members, Hamblin sadly recalled an occurrence apparently in the winter of 1856-57 when some of his charges among the Tonaquints informed him, "we cannot be good, we must be Paiutes." They expressed hope that the missionaries would continue to assist them, maintaining friendship and affirming that perhaps some of their children could be as "good" as the Latter-day Saint lifestyle prescribed. In a more telling statement of the extent to which Paiute tradition controlled their lives, they decreed "we want to follow our old customs." Actually, the Latter-day Saints and most other American missionaries to the Indians were for an extended time quite unrealistic to expect any people to so completely abandon such deeply ingrained traditions and ways of life so promptly.

There were other reasons for the dramatic changes as well. After the fateful Mountain Meadows Massacre later in the year, 1857, Mormon participants agreed among themselves to place the blame for the tragedy on their Native American associates. As one of the Santa Clara area sub-chiefs, Jackson, later informed a U. S. Army investigator, Major James H. Carleton, that he personally held some ill feeling and resentment toward his former allies not only for blaming his people so much for the tragedy but also for keeping more than their share of the loot, formerly promised to the Native Americans.⁹ Later, Apostle George A. Smith candidly reported to Brigham Young "I have been told that since the transaction [meaning the massacre] many of the Indians who had previously learned to labor have evinced determination not to work, and that the moral influence of the event upon

the civilization of the Indians has been very prejudicial." Under the circumstances, there are good reasons to have expected this.

The settlement of St. George in 1861, and a simultaneous lessening of missionary activity among the Tonaquints seemed to have, in Hamblin's words, further influenced "the feelings of the Indians toward the Saints [to become] more indifferent and their propensity to raid and steal returned." (About this time, Hamblin became preoccupied with missionary labors among the Arizona Hopi Indians, although others remained assigned with the Tonaquints.) He also attributed the decline of the formerly hospitable relationship with the Tonaquints to the "great number of animals brought into the country by the settlers." Their cattle and horses, he reported, "devoured most of the vegetation that had produced nutritious seeds [on] which the Indians had been accustomed to subsist." Ethnobotanists later established that this had been their most essential food source.¹⁰

Consequently, when Paiute children went hungry in the ensuing winters, the Indians spent much time discussing with Hamblin and other missionaries these disastrous changes, displaying increasingly greater resentments. Mormon livestock men usually did not understand that almost in a single year their cattle essentially destroyed the grass seed supply that had been the staple of the diet for many of the native inhabitants. The Dixie pioneers also had difficulty making a living and adding to their burden, they found themselves besieged by the begging of their impoverished Indian neighbors. Both the good early chronicler, James G. Bleak, and the equally respected more recent historian, Andrew Karl Larson, completely reflected the Dixie Mormons' seeming indifference to this problem and never voiced much empathy with the Native American viewpoint on the question. But Jacob Hamblin had naturally been more sympathetic and earlier noted that "those who had caused the troubles were completely oblivious to what had occurred." He confessed

having grieved many times to see the Indians with their little ones "glaring upon" the plenty enjoyed by the settlers. He attempted to raise the sensibilities of the Latter-day Saints on the matter and encouraged more generosity toward the neighboring Native Americans, but lamented that he had experienced little success.¹¹

On another equally crucial matter, Hamblin also complained to Apostle George A. Smith that it appeared Brigham Young had acted to "deprive the original settlers on the Santa Clara, or the Indians [there] of the water" of the river and to "build up St. George at the sacrifice of [Santa Clara and Tonaquint]." Indeed the new settlement, backed by local Apostle Erastus Snow, did initially make claims on that same stream, utilizing it on fields near the confluence with the Virgin (which they could not yet use successfully). Smith assured Hamblin that this allegation of bias against Santa Clara farmers was untrue, but promised to discuss the concern with the church leader. It is doubtful if the situation was resolved or even improved before Hamblin was transferred to the Kanab-Pipe Springs area. Already, the church had directed a relatively large group of Swiss converts to settle at Santa Clara, requiring an even larger share of the already-scarce irrigation water. The Southern Paiutes were clearly not the major concern of President Young in this course of events.¹² Whatever remained of the original Native American village of Tonaquint, on the lower Santa Clara, and probably much of the farmland there was destroyed in the devastating flood of 1862, as was the fort, and likely the former Indian residents never again resided at or farmed that area, although they did so farther up the river.¹³

With many of their familiar food resources destroyed by pioneer cattlemen, some Native Americans of the area felt justified in butchering and eating some of the livestock ranging on their traditional lands. Even before Hamblin's move farther east to Kanab, he noted that those Indians who were innocent of wrong doing and still "desired to be friends,"