

# Brother Butler took reins in Spanish Fork

One in a series celebrating the sesquicentennial of the Mormon pioneers' entry into Utah. The weekly articles will consist of excerpts from journals, diaries or other written records left by the early settlers of Utah Territory.

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## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Spanish Fork Ward and served for many years. His recollections give an interesting view of how towns evolved. Spelling and grammar have been left intact.)

Brother William Pace had been put in Bishop after Stephen Markham and at April conference, he was called to go to England on a mission. I was then put in his place by the people of Spanish Fork and

(John Lowe Butler joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints early while living in Kentucky and followed the various migrations from Missouri to Utah. He was called to be bishop of the

after a while I went down to the City (Salt Lake) and Brigham asked me if I had been ordained to the office of Bishop. I told him that I had not, neither did I want to be. But he said, I want you to be ordained to the office of Bishop and to go to work and build a city at Spanish Fork, and go right ahead building up the kingdom of God . . . He also told me the people of Palmyra was to leave their places and come and build in Spanish Fork. I returned home and asked the Lord to bless me and enable me to build up his Kingdom.

I told the folks at Palmyra that they had to move to Spanish Fork City. Some of them did not like it; there were some that always had a bitter feeling against the folks of the Upper settlement and they did not like the idea of having to move up and live with them. However, they were willing to obey the counsel given to them from Brigham. I had the city surveyed and layed off in blocks and city lots and had a water section brought down from the river up above the upper settlement. We had to put in a dam to

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get the water on the lowest bench.

I then went and made a field company and got them to get up a community and go to work and put a wall from the river west of the Country road and bring it north and then put (it) down to the river. Well, they went to work and put up the wall although some of the men at the time lived on nothing in the world but bran and weeds. It was a great undertaking for them but the Lord was with them and helped them and then the folks built a bridge across Spanish Fork River; they got timber out of the mountains and went to work and put it right up.

Well, the folks put in their crops and folks put in their early vegetables so that they could have something to eat. I put in considerable grain myself but I did not have much time to attend to it and the cattle got into it and destroyed a great deal of it, but the most of the folks done pretty well and raised good crops.

Brother Captain Davis had made

a shantie of willows and he had stacked his grain close by and one day the wind was blowing pretty hard and caught the shantie on fire and blew and caught the stacks and burnt nearly every thing that they had, and all the grain was destroyed entirely. I was down there and helped to save what things we could, but the fire raged so that there was not much chance of saving anything.

Well, I knew it was pretty hard to lose all they had almost, and so I thought that I would get up a subscription for them. I did so, and raised over a hundred bushels of wheat for him and the women folks went to work and got them some clothes and so they did not feel the loss like they would if it had not been done for them.

I went to work and fixed up John W. Mott's house for a tithing office and got Brother Raymond for a clerk. I hired two men then to build a tithing corral, which was used for a stray pen, publick corral and stock yard for tithing hay and cane.

I had no corral of my own, yet I had corral room. But there was no poles there and so I stacked my grain in the tithing stack yard, but it got nearly all destroyed for I had

bought some goats of Ruben Allred . . . and they would jump any place no matter what kind of a fence it was, they used to jump over the wall and get at the grain. Well, I had a stake and rider on the top of the wall. Well, these goats would jump and walk right on the pole that was for a rider and they would run on the top of it as good as they would on the ground and the sheep learned to follow them, so that there was nothing to stay them.

(When he attended a local conference of the church, he learned that:) Brother Brigham said that the folks wanted a reformation among them, and they (the local speakers) told us that we had to go to work and be baptized again and live our religion more than we had done and they told me that I had to go to the City and get my instructions as to what I should do. I went down to the City and went to Brother Brigham and he asked how I felt and how I was getting along. I told him. He then gave me instructions what to do and how to do and told me that I had to be baptized there, and then go back and baptize the folks and ordain Teachers to go round and visit the Saints

Well, I returned home and set my counselors to work, which were Albert K. Thurber and George Wilkins and I told them what they were to do . . . and we went to work and re-baptized all the folks and re-ordained them members of The Church of Jesus Christ . . . and we began to feel the blessings of God poured out upon us.

Brother Brigham and counselors made a catachism or code of laws for the Saints to go by and all the Bishops had to get the people one by one by themselves and ask them these questions that were on the code of laws and if the people had broken any of these laws they were told to do so no more and they were forgiven for what they had done . . . This made the people feel good . . .

Now the Emigration across the plains was very late; they all got caught in the snow, they were strung from Weber River to Fort Bridger and there they was starving and freezing to death. It was dreadful the accounts. Brother Brigham gave orders in all the settlements to rig up teams to go back and bring the sufferers in. Now the snow was from six to fifteen feet

deep and there was no road broke across the mountain at all. Well, the word came down to me to rig up six teams and send two men to every team for teamsters and there were four mules or horses to each wagon and the wagons were to (be) loaded with horse feed, provisions, clothing and every comfort of life that could be sent. Now; this all was to be done by donation.

So I called the people together and told them the situation of their brethern and sisters and then we had to rig up teams and send out men for them. This was in December and it was bitter cold. The snow in the Valley here was eighteen inches deep on the level and it was snowing in the mountains all the time. Well, we got them all rigged up and I never had less trouble getting up such an expedition for the Saints were willing and on hand to do almost anything.

My son, Taylor, I sent out with them to superintend the expedition. He drove a wagon as well, and he told me how he found the Saints and how the road was. He said there were teams reached nearly from the City to Fort Bridger . . . in some places the snow was above the wagon bows on each

side and they found the Saints in an awful condition, some with their feet froze and some with their fingers froze and they had no food to eat and he said he never saw such a sight before, it was dreadful and he said they were so over-joyed they did not know what to do hardly. Well, they were all picked up and fed and clothes given to them . . .

They brought some of the folks to Spanish Fork and I never saw such objects in my life as they were. There was a young man that George Sevey brought down with him that looked like a shadow. He would reel to and fro when he walked he was so weak and his toes were froze . . .

(Brother Butler continued to administer the affairs of his ward sometimes "settling difficulties, some with husbands and wives, and told them to make it all up and live their religion . . . I had to marry folks at different times and bless children and one thing and another that it took up the greater part of my time." He died an old man with many descendants.)