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VI

Great Salt Lake City

Aug. 7, 1849²⁶

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VII

[Great Salt Lake City
October (?), 1849]²⁷

When I first came into the valley there was a large number of emigrants here, that expected to stay till spring, but now all seem determined to go on, which is mainly owing to the uncongeniality of feeling existing between the people here and themselves. I must say, in reference to these people—I have been disappointed in them. I had supposed them an abused people; I had thought them falsely accused of all manner of crime when in the states. However it may have been there, it has proven to be a fact here that there is nothing they will not do. From the highest in authority to the most servile and beggarly, they will steal, rob and *beg* worse than the worst indians we have yet met with. They have resorted to all manner of devices to induce emigrants to stay with them, for no reason but to steal and beg from them. * * * No man can live among them who is not one of them, because I believe they consider all as lawful [omission?] that does not belong to the Saints. So take them as they are, and the earth does not produce so degraded, so damnable a community of people. The morals and order of society are totally disregarded by them. Their Bishops take as many women as they wish, and discard them at pleasure. Some instances have come under my notice where men have a mother and three daughters at the same time as wives. It is

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of us. We hear that there is great distress behind on account of lack of food, and sickness among the emigrants. The emigrants and cattle are dying by thousands; the cholera is in the rear of the train. It followed us about 300 miles, since which time we have not seen a case. Game has been abundant, principally elk, buffalo and antelope. I can tell you some long and interesting yarns about buffalo and antelope hunting, and will some time when we are in the back room of a saloon in Rochester—some time when I have more leisure than at present. We hear very favorable and flattering accounts from the gold regions by the Mormons.

Yours &c., J[AMES]. E. S[QUIRE].

V

[Great Salt Lake City
July, 1849]²¹

The settlement at the point from which I am now writing was commenced in the month of July, 1847, the second anniversary of which will be celebrated by them on the 24th of the present month. The valley in which the city is located is on the east side of the Lake, and is about twenty-five miles wide, and completely shut in by high mountains, the Utah and Bear River ranges being the principal.²² From the spot where I am now writing I can see the tops of them reaching almost to the clouds, covered with perpetual snow. The city contains about 9,000 inhabitants, and is laid out in squares, the streets running at right angles with each other. These squares are fenced in by one fence running around the whole; the squares are divided into wards, and the wards into blocks, and the blocks into lots—each lot contains one acre and one-fourth of land.

The possession of these was given by drawing lots, in this way: tickets were got up with numbers on them, and put into a hat together, and then drawn out, each man taking the lot bearing the number of his ticket. The houses are built of *adobes*, or sun-burnt brick; they are small, but present a neat and cleanly appearance. The entrance to the valley is over a very rough and mountainous gorge in the mountains, through which the road runs, and at the foot of which the city is situated. The Lake, which is a great curiosity, is 21 miles from the city; the water is a great deal saltier than sea-water, and is so buoyant that a man can float on it without any difficulty whatever. Salt is so plentiful about the shore that it is shoveled up by wagon loads like sand, and drawn to the city. It is coarse and clear, and is very clean. Fine salt is obtained by boiling the water, which yields

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The country is settled by farmers for forty miles north and south.²³ They are now engaged in harvesting their wheat, which is yielding an abundant crop. They are very strict in enforcing their penalties—punishing each crime according to its enormity, making the thief return four-fold, and pay so much into the public treasury by working on the roads. The Government is composed of a High Council, the President taking the head; they enact laws, try offences, and make suggestions for the good of the community, and all such laws and suggestions are declared from the pulpit every Sunday. Their money consists of treasury notes, which are issued for coin and gold-dust placed on deposit. Arrangements are being made for coining this dust, and establishing a currency of their own.²⁴ Large quantities of gold dust has been brought into the Settlement by discharged soldiers [members of the Mormon Battalion], and those who have gone from there for the purpose of digging, so that all the reports we heard there are confirmed here by those who have been and returned loaded with gold.

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21. Reprinted from the Kanecville, Iowa, *Frontier Guardian*, February 20, 1850. This letter had evidently been going the rounds of the press; the prefatory remarks run as follows: "In the *Auburn* [N. Y.?] *Daily Advertiser* of Wednesday we find a letter from an adventurer who had reached the Mormon City of the Salt Lake on his way to California, and writes as follows of that newly-found community."

22. The term "Bear River Mountains" was used in 1849 as applying to the whole mountain mass between the upper and the lower Bear River valleys, the southern reaches of which are now designated as the Wasatch Mountains. "Utah Mountains," although applied also to the Uintas, seems to have been used by Forty-niners to designate the range called by the Mormons the West Mountains, but known today by their Indian name, the Oquirrh Mountains.

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