My Voyage from Zion in Utah to Zion in Paradise, or
What Treasures Do You Have in Your Attic?

by
S. George Ellsworth

Mahalo and Aloha to you, Kenneth Baldridge, and all you good people. I am deeply grateful for the invitation to participate in this conference. It is a pleasure to be with you, to partake of gracious and loving Hawaiian hospitality, the fine food, and share in the rich experiences of the day. The program has been outstanding and some presentations alone worth the trip here.

The last time I was asked to give an after-dinner speech, I prepared with great diligence and thought I gave a splendid talk. Afterwards, a little old lady came up to me and said, "Professor Ellsworth, your talk was simply superfluous." I recovered enough to say, "Well, thank you. I appreciate that very much. You know, I'm thinking of having it published, posthumously." "Oh, good," she replied, "the sooner the better."

Please accept my hearty congratulations for forming the Mormon Pacific Historical Society. There are many values we derive from such associations. And while it may sound a little like the fellow who began his talk by saying, "Before I give my talk I would like to say something important," with your indulgence, I would like to comment on the values I see in active participation in such gatherings. Here like-minded friends meet and exchange ideas, views, experiences, and information on ways and means of researching and writing. Here we share the results of years of research. Here we are on the frontiers of human knowledge, learning what has not been known before, except to a very few. Here we learn how others have solved their research problems. We learn about the archives and libraries of the world and how to gain access to their rich treasures. The mental stimulation from this kind of experience should last us a long time.

Shortly after I was appointed to the History faculty at Utah State University in Logan, the Cache Valley centennial came up, and the Cache Valley Historical Society was formed. We held monthly meetings, heard papers read, and exchanged ideas on early Cache history. We wanted the papers written so they would be preserved for future readers, so when a presenter did not have the talk written out, we arranged to take it down in shorthand and transcribed it.

We established a little archives that soon grew to a few feet on the shelves of the university library. There were some great people there—close to the early days themselves—and their memories were recorded. Those were the best days of that society, when we heard from pioneers or near-pioneers, or from persons who did excellent research into the pioneer experiences. Were the society in business today it would be sponsoring a good deal of oral history. If we are not careful, a whole generation can pass away without records of those lives and times. We did take precautions to preserve old written records. I visited the towns and cities, borrowed their official records, put them in order (when they needed it) and microfilmed them. Out of all this, and some writing, came The History of a Valley ..., a book long-since out-of-print, and in need of revision, so much has been learned since then.

All of you are aware, of course, of the Mormon History Association, organized sixteen years ago, mainly by Leonard J. Arrington. That organization had its roots in late-night sessions at national historical conventions when a group of Mormon historians would meet in someone's hotel room and talk into the night about what they were doing and the prospects for future studies. Everyone was enriched by those talks. The Mormon History Association is today a full-fledged historical society with annual meetings, a full program, guest speakers, dinners, tours, frequently meeting at historic Mormon sites or near them. The association now publishes a Journal of Mormon History which features essays on subjects of general interest. Your own Mormon Pacific Historical Society seems to have come a long way in a short time, much faster than Mormon History Association.

The point I would make is that as a result of these associations and their meetings, sponsoring research and giving forum to new research, our knowledge of Mormon history has changed so much in the past decade or two that the general works will have to be rewritten. Older histories, based on limited documentation, will now be replaced by newer histories based on the synthesis of the research of scores, even hundreds of historians like yourselves. And being in an association such as this makes you a partner in and contributor in that expansion of knowledge.

My ten years as managing editor and editor of the Western Historical Quarterly, published by Utah State University in association with the Western History Association, gave me an appreciation for the hundreds of scholarly publications of interest to the historian of the American West. Our exchange
list of some 328 journals brought to our office the publications of state and local historical societies, regional journals, national journals, and leading journals of Great Britain and Europe, as well as journals in the various disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. We found in all of these articles relevant to some aspect of the American westering experience. Scholarly journals publish not only articles but book reviews, lists of recently published articles abstracted from hundreds of other journals, and news and notes. Each of these must come to grips with the reality that others are working our field, too, and can help us a great deal. We need to read those journals in our field, broadly conceived. A writer likes nothing better than to know that he is read, and to hear from readers can open up friendships and result in helpful exchange of information about our researches.

In all our research we begin with the known and proceed to the unknown. One fact leads us to another fact. And so we fan out and extend the borders of knowledge until we think we have a pretty good grasp of the backgrounds for our subject and all the sources relating to our subject. Of great help are meetings such as this and the publications of historical groups. Your own Proceedings, First Annual Conference, Mormon History in the Pacific, August 1-2, 1980, and hopefully a long line of successors, will become prized volumes in the near future. Pacific Studies, edited by your own Robert D. Craig and published by the Institute for Polynesian Studies, is taking its place among the scholarly journals devoted to the Pacific Ocean area. If I were designing The Western Historical Quarterly again I would borrow some features from the Journal of Pacific History, particularly its regular feature of essays on the archives and bibliography of the field. I did try to establish a "Sources and Literature" section, but it amounted to work too much for me, and knowledgeable people seemed to prefer doing other jobs instead. But through such aids in journals and society meetings you can get altogether on top of your subject.

But how did I get interested in Latter-day Saint history in the Pacific? That's a story I thought I might tell—that's my voyage from Zion in Utah to Zion in Paradise—and along the way illustrate some ways in which we find our sources and how we are helped by our friends in associations such as the Mormon Pacific Historical Society.

One summer, researching in the Church Historian's Office on the history of Mormon missions beginning in 1850, I came upon the fascinating story of a missionary highly successful on an island in the Society Islands. I shared my enthusiasm for the story of his activities with my wife. She asked, "What was his name?" "Addison Pratt," I responded. To my surprise, she replied, "He was my great-great-grandfather." Addison Pratt remained an interest, but put on the shelf when I restricted my dissertation on the history of Mormon missions to the United States and Canada for the years 1830-1860. But some summers later he came front and center with us.

Through an exchange professorship with Whitney R. Cross of West Virginia University, I went east and took the family, including my wife's mother. While there I conducted surveys of major university, regional, and state archives and libraries searching out manuscript holdings relating to any and all of Utah's territorial officials. The trip included a week in Washington, D.C., and while the family took in the sights I spent days in the National Archives and the Library of Congress. Mother Pauline quietly watched me search for fragments on obscure public servants, and by the time we were back in Salt Lake City she had arranged to have the Addison Pratt journals placed in my hands for study and publication. She said as much as, "Now here's a story. Get your teeth into something worthwhile."

The excitement of those first evenings of reading the journals is still with me. I found that Addison Pratt's granddaughters had made a manuscript copy of the originals, and that their manuscript copy had been used for a typewritten copy that had been used by persons to this point. My historical training insisted on a complete, exact, and literal transcription of the original. After one evening of proofing no more than two or three pages of the typescript, finding so many errors—changes, omissions, deletions—that I gave that up and turned to the original manuscript. All the tests we apply to documents proved it genuine. A new typescript was made and proofed over and over again.

In time the family furnished other items: the journals of Louise Barnes (Mrs. Addison) Pratt, together with a large collection of letters dating from 1828 to after the turn of the century. From Mae C. White of Beaver I obtained the journals of Mrs. Pratt's sister, Caroline Barnes Crosby, and some writings by Jonathan Crosby. All these journals and letters were microfilmed for securi;
and have since been typed and proofed for exactness. The typewritten transcripts serve my needs instead of the original manuscripts now, for the originals must be kept in as prime condition as possible. Thanks to the xerox machine a good deal of typing and proofing has been eliminated.

With Addison Pratt on this mission to the Society Islands—leaving Nauvoo on June 1, 1843, and sailing from New Bedford on the Timoleon on October 9—were three others: Noah Rogers, Benjamin F. Grouard, and Knowltin F. Hanks. (My wife is a descendant of Addison Pratt, and Mrs. Kenneth Baldridge is a descendant of Noah Rogers—both here tonight) I wanted to know what there might be in the Church Historian's Office. I went there and spoke with President Joseph Fielding Smith, then Church Historian, and he instructed his associates to give me copies of anything I wanted in connection with this study. The Benjamin F. Grouard journal was furnished me on microfilm. The Noah Rogers diary was made available and extensive notes were taken from it. Knowltin F. Hanks died at sea and was there buried according to seaman's rites. I have found little on Hanks. The Rogers family has been helpful with family history there. The Church Historian's Office also provided copies of letters from these and other missionaries who later went to the island mission. Much help has come to these studies of mine from the people at the Church Historian's Office (now called the Archives, Church Historical Department).

While there is nothing quite like being in the archives on the spot and searching for yourself, writing letters can be very profitable. At home with the manuscript, I outlined the life of Addison Pratt and his companions, noting all possible avenues that might open up to verify the story told in the documents before me, and also give me a fuller understanding of the world in which the missionaries lived and acted out their drama. For Pratt's seafaring days during the 1820s—whaling and other shipping, in the Atlantic, the Pacific (he was in the Hawaiian Islands in 1822, the root origins of this Society Islands mission), and the Mediterranean—I wrote New England historical societies and whaling museums and received all I could ask for supporting his whaling experiences down to the names of the vessels, captains, owners, and yield in whale oil per trip.

At a conference of historians like this, a friend with a patient ear to listen to my story suggested I try the National Archives for United States consular reports from Tahiti, also collections of ships' logs held there and elsewhere. To my delight I was able to obtain a microfilm copy of the log of the Timoleon for this very voyage, and in the consular reports found references to the Timoleon at Tahiti.

You see, Addison Pratt's journal for the seven months on that voyage does not give the captain very good marks for seamanship and whaling proficiency, and for all I knew I had on hand the journal of a fellow who was supercritical of other people, perhaps not a good observer of men and events. But the consular reports contained a letter by the U.S. consul in Tahiti explaining why he had to take the ship Timoleon from the captain, confine the sick captain ashore, and return the vessel to its owners with its present crew. Pratt's observations were vindicated in my eyes. And this happened time and time again until my admiration for his perceptions and honesty and accuracy knew no bounds.

Librarians can be positive "angels" of helpfulness. They are a special breed. They consider a day lost if they have not helped hundreds of people solve their problems. One day our wonderful reference librarian at Utah State, Ida-Marie Logan (since Mrs. Jensen) phoned me and asked, "Are you interested in cremation in Utah?" I replied, "Not yet." Well, it seems she had a reference to an article on someone being cremated in Utah, July 31, 1877. I yielded and asked "What's his name?" "Charles F. Winslow." I said, "I'll be right down." Well, Dr. Charles F. Winslow and family were on the Timoleon voyage with my missionaries in 1843. A letter to an editor was forwarded to the author of the article and in time a fine correspondence resulted in my receiving copies of letters written by Mrs. Winslow aboard that vessel that trip, describing my missionaries and the death and burial of Brother Hanks. Here is independent testimony of events heretofore told only in three missionary journals. In historical research, as in a court of law, we like to have independent witnesses whenever possible.

Basic reference tools including the telephone book can be very useful instruments. Andrew Jensen's Church Chronicle noted the death of Benjamin F. Grouard on March 19, 1894, Santa Ana, California. The telephone book for Orange county led me to Grouards still living there, and from one of that family I obtained considerable family history including photographs and Grouard's Tahitian Bible. Obituaries can be an excellent beginning point. Librarians in Santa Ana helped me again, and soon I had a clipping file on him.
One day, puzzling the Grouard biography, I wandered about the reference shelves, came to the Dictionary of American Biography and found not Benjamin F. Grouard, but a Frank Grouard, Indian scout, son of Benjamin F. Grouard, a Mormon missionary and a Polynesian wife. It's true. Elder Grouard married Tearo on Ana, "the prettiest and best girl on the island," Pratt wrote. By Tearo, Grouard had a daughter, then the mother died. Grouard married again, this time Nohina by whom he had three children, one named Ephraim. When Mrs. Pratt and others came to the islands in 1850, Mrs. Pratt became attached to Ephraim and he was given to her as her own. Without tracing the story of the mother and the other children, suffice it to say that Ephraim went to the states with the Pratts in 1852 when the mission closed, lived with Mrs. Pratt in San Francisco, San Bernardino, and in Beaver, Utah. But on a trip to Salt Lake City he disappeared, went to carrying mail into Montana, was captured by the Blackfeet, stripped naked and turned loose seventy miles from the nearest post. He survived to carry mail again only to be captured by the Siouxs who took him for an Indian child reared by the whites. Ephraim was with the Siouxs for five years, becoming a member of the tribe, learning their language, customs, travel habits, and all. He left them and turned himself over to General Crook who was then in command of the Department of the Platte. Ephraim now adopted his brother's name of Frank and his father's surname Grouard. In the years following he played a significant role as chief scout for General Crook in the campaigns against the Siouxs. His exploits got in the newspapers and in time both his father Benjamin F. Grouard and his mother Louisa Barnes Pratt got in touch with him. The father visited him in Montana. Mrs. Pratt received letters from him, with promises that he would visit her as soon as this campaign was over. That reunion did not take place. Stranger than fiction, the story is verified by the histories of those wars, biographies, accounts of the scouts, news reporters, and the army pay rolls I have seen in the National Archives that list Frank Grouard as chief scout with Crook—he was listed first on the civilian payroll, and was well paid. But all this takes me away from my story of those missionaries in French Polynesia.

Which brings up the subject of the French Protectorate over the islands, established at the very time our missionaries arrived in the Society Islands. If our National Archives yielded some help, how about the French Archives Nationale. Here I had both difficulties and success. Somehow I got to writing the Société des Amis de la Bibliothèque Nationale. They were most helpful in telling me what was there, but it would take individual searches for the exact documents. On more than one occasion I sent the requested amount of money and received a summary of what had been found, but it would take more money. And so on. Ultimately I obtained a good report, abstracting some quotes from the documents referring to our missionaries by name, with the needed reference to group and file where found. But they could not film whole files; it was against policy. How to proceed? I gave up until a European tour with the Northern Wasatch Youth Orchestra (my son Mark was principal cellist and we went along for the ride). In Paris, while they visited the Louvre and Versailles, I spent time in the Archives Nationale, found the files, and many documents of great help on the background against which our missionaries operated, and only a few documents on the Mormons in Tahiti—it seemed to me that the very documents that had been abstracted for me previously were simply missing from the file in front of me. I thought I could tell just where that document should be. But, alas, my reading French helped me not at all in getting any further than placing an order for microfilming the documents I found of value to me. Certainly there was verification here for the political and religious environment in which the missionaries worked.

But that day in Paris was highlighted by lunch at a sidewalk cafe as the guest of Father Patrick O'Reilly, director of the Musée de l'Homme, and historian of Christianity in the Pacific Ocean area. He had obtained my name some years before and we had corresponded and I had furnished him books and information he desired on Mormon missionaries in the Pacific for his works. At that luncheon he told me that the French government had asked him to create in Tahiti a museum of Archaeology and history and that he wanted a room on the Mormons in the islands. To whom a he write for the long list of things he wanted in that room? I gave him the name and address of President Spencer W. Kimball, trusting in his full support for such a project and that the request would be answered.

Some months later, in the Archives, Church Historical Department, I inquired if such a request had come. The correspondence was traced down and had been answered with a copy of a magazine article on the subject. I asked to get into the act, and had one of the unique experiences of my life. The Church Historical Department cooperated fully. Their Paul Foulger, book preservatist, (he had taken training in the British Museum), set to work to create exact
fascimilies of the Grouard and Rogers diaries. I had the Pratt journals, and we found paper approximating the paper Pratt used for his legal size signatures that comprise his journals, and xeroxed pages of Pratt's journals onto that paper, touching it up with "age" marks and otherwise we got into the business of creating fascimile documents. (The items were correctly and honestly labeled.) Books were brought together including Grouard's Tahitian Bible. Essay was written and translated into French. For weeks the display was on my front room floor, and as the real object or the fascimile was obtained, onto the floor into its proper place it went. The greatest difficulty was to supply "original oil portraits" of Pratt and Grouard. Impossible. Yet we had daguerreotype portrait photographs, in lovely gold-edged and red velvet little cases, leather bound, of Addison Pratt, Louisa Barnes Pratt, and Benjamin F. Grouard. The story is too long to tell here, suffice it to say that through the fine camera and color work of my friend Ted Hansen at Utah State, and Keith Montague of Bailey & Montague of Salt Lake City, beautiful portraits of Pratt and Grouard, in frames like those of the period were included. The whole was boxed and sent air freight to Tahiti. It took a couple of years for me to learn that the museum was built and the exhibit up, not a room, but a display at any rate. Bob Craig was the first to tell me the exhibit was up, thanks to Father O'Reilly's efforts. The Deseret News, LDS Church News section, January 3, 1961, carried a story with pictures of the exhibit and the Church's mission in French Polynesia.

We had tapped American and French sources. What of English sources? After all, the London Missionary Society had taken Christianity to the Society Islands, committed the language to writing, and had translated the Bible into Tahitian. They had certainly prepared the way for our missionaries, but were also the chief antagonists of our missionaries. Through a long search I learned which libraries in the United States had microfilm copies of the papers, letters, and diaries of the English missionaries. A graduate student at University of California, Los Angeles, formerly an assistant with the history department at Utah State, surveyed the collection of reels and ascertained exactly which reels I would need to read. I prised the check I sent her for her trouble—it was returned, uncanceled, written on the face: "Don't be silly." She had performed great service for me.

A reading of those reels, borrowed on inter-library loan, yielded much of the spirit and work of the English missionaries, documenting the story told in the Mormon diaries and letters. It is a rather fine type of documentation to read, for example, Noah Rogers' diary of his preaching one Sunday, then go to the diary of an English missionary on that island and read what he attended Brother Rogers' services and tells what doctrines he taught, and know that would be his teaching! And so the Mormon diaries tell about the English, and the English diaries tell about the Mormons.

There is a time in our researching when we reach the point of diminishing returns and it is time to finish writing and put it out onto the public. I reached that point years ago, soon after I gave the Faculty Honor Lecture on the subject, summarizing the whole story in Sing in Paradise: Early Mormons in the South Seas (Logan: Utah State University, Faculty Association, 1959). The publication did for me then what yours will do for you—open up new avenues of approach and perhaps new sources. Even today, there are still some unanswered questions in my mind. We must not get so taken up with the thrill of the detective phase of historical studies that we fail to get around to writing the detective out and getting it published. That's where I am now. And I must hurry.

But what about you? All this I have told you got started with some loose signatures of a journal stored variously in a house. Look at the story that has unfolded! What hidden stories are there in your attic? Those documents must be ferreted out. Begin at home: search every nook and corner of your home, and bring together the documents, organize them into file folders by the name of the author of each, and have the documents microfilmed and xeroxed for security. Share them with libraries and archives so the grim reaper will not take those materials when he comes for us. Documents must be found and preserved for the future. You must write your own memoirs, for they will be locked to in future generations with appreciation and gratitude even as we now look to the materials I have described this evening. See to it that copies of your memoirs, diaries, letters, important papers are preserved in the library and the archives. Look to the sources: If you lose your heritage, you lose everything. May God bless you in your endeavors, in this association, in your own researches, and in your writing your own story.

Mahalo and Aloha!