Levi Ward Hancock: Pioneer, Soldier, Political and Religious Leader of Early Utah

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LEVI WARD HANCOCK

PIONEER, SOLDIER, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADER OF EARLY UTAH

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Dennis A Clegg

April 1966
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis, while the work of the author, could not have been possible without the assistance and encouragement of a number of people. Thanks and appreciation are expressed to the following for their support and cooperation.

To Dr. Eugene Campbell, chairman of the History Department and of this committee, for his guidance and direction, and for his patient and helpful suggestions in reading and checking this work. He consistently made himself available whenever assistance was needed.

In addition to Dr. Campbell, thanks also to Dr. Paul V. Hyer, Gustave Larsen, and Elliott Tuttle, all members of the advisory committee who gave helpful suggestions. All were most cooperative.

To Chad Flake, director of Special Collections Sections of the Brigham Young University Library, for his cooperation in making journals and other records available for use.

To Mrs. Geraldine Harrison, a descendant of Levi Hancock, for her helpful information; to Leonard Bacon for making available his great-grandfather’s journal of the Mormon Battalion period. To the LDS Church Historian’s Office for use of Church records and histories. To many libraries, to city, county, and state offices for their kind cooperation.

And finally, to my devoted wife, Georgia Dawn, who gave time, encouragement, and helpful suggestions, and who typed all the drafts and final copies of this thesis, I am deeply indebted.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the settlement of the far western part of the United States there are many and varied numbers of people involved. The story of none of them is more unusual and unique than that of the settlement of Utah and the Great Basin by the Latter-day Saints. Many courageous and valiant men are a part of the history of this determined religious people in their efforts to leave the frontier of the 1840's and find a place of seclusion in the West, where they might live peacefully and unmolested by those whom they considered to be their enemies.

Among the men who took part in the establishment of this unusual frontier religious group and in the exodus of this body to the Rocky Mountains, and finally in the founding and colonization of Utah, was Levi W. Hancock. It will be seen from the following study that few men exceeded him in devotion and dedication to the causes of his Church. A life of self-sacrifice to his religion, typical of most Mormon leaders, led him to experience many adventures, and brought him to positions of leadership in the Church, in his communities, and even in the Territorial Government.

These chapters are an attempt to trace the life of this man as he contributed to the development of his Church and to the building of Utah. Since Utah was settled by the Mormons, its history is closely
interwoven with that of the "Mormon" Church, as it is commonly called. As this Church had its beginnings on the expanding frontiers of this nation in the 1830's and 1840's, any history of Utah's early settlement must of necessity include the activities of the Mormon Church prior to its arrival in the Great Basin. Levi Hancock's activities were a part of this history.

The life of Levi Hancock points up the loyalty of most Mormons to their Church leaders and their devout faith in their religion. Levi Hancock's devotion to his Church was so strong that he may have appeared fanatical to non-Mormons. He unwaveringly attempted to follow the instructions of Church leaders in a most literal way. Sometimes it brought him into conflict with his own "brethren", as shall be seen in his activities with the Mormon Battalion.

In presenting the life of Levi Hancock, facts directly relating to two important phases (as well as others) of Mormon history are brought forth. They have to do with the celebrated march of the Mormon Battalion and the role of the First Council of the Seventies in the Mormon Church.

Levi Hancock was ordained to the first and original council of Seventy, one of the presiding Priesthood bodies of the Church. It is now considered the third presiding quorum of the General Authorities\(^1\) over the Church. He remained active in this office until his death in 1882.

As a member of the Mormon Battalion he participated in the accomplishments of this military body. Because of his position as a member of

\(^1\) A General Authority in the Mormon Church is one who is a member of one of the three groups of the hierarchy. These quorums in order of authority are the First Presidency, consisting of a President and two counselors, The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the First Seven Presidents of the Seventy.
the First Council of Seventy and the only General Authority in the Bat-
talion, he became the spiritual leader of the men. Many sought his advice
and counsel and he took a prominent part in the religious affairs of the
military unit.

Scope and Delimitation

It is the purpose of this study to pursue these and other vital
phases of the life of Levi W. Hancock, and his activities relative to the
Church and the Territory of Utah, where he settled.

The history of this man is connected directly with the following
major events in Mormon and Utah history:

1. Church activities in Kirtland, Ohio
2. The march of Zion's Camp, 1834
3. Organization of original First Council of Seventy, 1835
4. Church settlement and conflicts in Missouri and Illinois
5. The exodus of Mormons from Nauvoo
6. The march of the Mormon Battalion and its religious leadership
7. The settlement of Salt Lake Valley
8. The practice of polygamy in the Mormon Church
9. The Territorial Legislature
10. Law of consecration of property to the Church
11. The settlement of Sanpete, Utah, and Washington Counties
12. The Church Jubilee year of 1880

Basic Sources

Material for this thesis was obtained from a variety of sources.
Several personal diaries and journals, including three of Levi W. Hancock's,
have been used. One is a diary of his life from childhood to his mid-
thirties, (about 1836). This diary has been hand-typed by his grand-
daughter, Clara E. Lloyd. It also contains excerpts from the diary of
Levi's son, Mosiah, as inserted by Mrs. Lloyd. This copy is located in
the Special Collections Section of the J. Reuben Clark Library, Brigham
Young University, Provo, Utah. A complete typewritten copy of Mosiah Han-
cock's autobiography is also found in the same library at Brigham Young
University. This has proved very valuable to this study. Three other
journals, one fairly large and two very small ones, contain Levi Hancock's
own account of his life while serving in the Mormon Battalion. These are
original journals which are found at the Library of the Church Historian
in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The private diary of Corporal Thomas Dunn, great-grandfather of
one of the author's colleagues, was made available and has proved helpful
in relating events in the Mormon Battalion march.

Also at the Library of the Church Historian is the Journal History
of the Church which has been consulted. This History consists of five
hundred typewritten volumes giving day by day accounts of Church history.
It contains letters, journals and sermons of Church leaders. There are
also journal histories of the march of the Mormon Battalion and the
return of the Battalion. Here also is the manuscript history of Brigham
Young. All these sources have been studied.

Records of stakes and wards of the Church found in this library
have been used also, as have the records of the towns and counties where
Levi Hancock lived. The State Archives at the Utah Historical Society
have been investigated and also other records at the Society that contain-
ed useful and pertinent information.
Many published books and some periodicals have been studied and used which cover the various phases of Church and Utah history in which Levi Hancock's life was involved. Another valuable source on the Mormon Battalion period was a doctoral dissertation, "The History of the L.D.S. Church in California, 1846-1946" by Eugene E. Campbell, now Chairman of Brigham Young University History Department. Some master's theses which relate to aspects of this history have been consulted. Interviews with several of Hancock's descendants have been enlightening. While little documented material was obtained, the spirit of Levi was felt in the interviews. Stories handed down through family tradition substantiated other resource material. They also helped verify information that was only hinted at by other records.
CHAPTER II
EARLY LIFE, 1803-1830

Background and Early Impressions

Levi Hancock was born in New England on April 7, 1803, in Springfield, Massachusetts. When he was two years old his father moved with his family, consisting of his wife and seven children, to New York State and settled in Bristol, Ontario County.

The ancestors of Levi Hancock arrived very early in this land. According to Herbert S. Allen, the first Hancock of this line was Nathaniel, who arrived in 1633.1 The Hancocks were apparently industrious and conscientious people and played an important part in the establishment of early America. The diary of Levi's son, Mosiah, concerning the early contributions of this family toward the building of this nation reveals the following: "We are of the Old Puritan stock that was in Boston as early as 1632, and my ancestors fought for the freedom of our country. All laid down their lives, of my Father's relatives in the war of the Revolution, except Thomas, my father's father, and he came out of the war honorably discharged when fourteen years of age."2

In tracing the genealogy of Levi Hancock it appears that one of his great uncles was the patriot, John Hancock, first signer of the

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2The Life Story of Mosiah Lyman Hancock, typed copy, Brigham Young University Library, Special Collections, p. 1.
Declaration of Independence.\(^1\) Levi was proud of this heritage. It undoubtedly influenced his great feeling of appreciation for American democracy. Preaching on one occasion to those whom he felt were trying to deprive him of his liberty he said: "My father fought for liberty you now enjoy and you want to deprive me of the liberty that rightly belongs to me. I am a son of the only man who survived the great struggles for independence, who belonged to the family, and I am a cousin to the first man who signed the Declaration of Independence."\(^2\) Hancock believed in preserving his rich heritage in democracy.

Very early in his life Levi became aware of the beliefs in a life after death than being taught. These teachings were probably an inheritance of the strict religious doctrines of old New England. His great-grandfather and his great, great-grandfather, both named John Hancock, and another great-grandfather, a Reverend Clark, were all ministers in the Congregational Church.\(^3\)

In his diary Levi records that at the age of four he prayed seriously to the Lord about these matters. His mother often told him that he must love God or the devil would have him. This frightened him so that he could not sleep nights. His journal describes the following:

I would have her tell me about the damned souls in Hell and how they had to be in a lake of fire and they would not die.

\(^1\)Diary of Levi W. Hancock, typed copy, Brigham Young University, Special Collections, p. 106.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 57. Although Levi refers to John Hancock as a cousin, histories show John a brother to Levi's grandfather, Thomas, thus making him a great uncle to Levi.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 106.
This wrought such a serious impression upon my mind I was like to be distracted before I made it known. At last I broke out after I had lain all night without sleep and said, "Mother, must I die?" "Yes," she said. Then I said, "I wish I had not been made." "Why?" said Mother. I said, "Because I am afraid I shall not be saved." 

These experiences and feelings undoubtedly helped to shape the attitude and thinking of Levi Hancock in a way that was to affect his religious actions as a Mormon later in his life, for he frequently attributed much of his behavior to dreams and impressions that he claimed to have had. He often dwelt on matters of a spiritual nature that he felt were of divine origin. Particularly was this true while he was the spiritual leader of the Mormon Battalion, as well as later during his life in Utah.

When he was in his fifth year, Levi's father moved his family to several different places, where they endured the usual hardships of that day in the course of making a living. Moving was to be a frequent occurrence in the life of Levi Hancock. His life's journey was to take him from Massachusetts all the way across the continent to California, and back to Utah. He was even to make several moves within Utah before his life would end in the little town of Washington in southern Utah. All of these moves after 1830 were motivated by his membership in the new church organization he had joined in that year. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly called the "Mormon" church, was to change the whole course of his life, as it did that of thousands of others.

This religious spirit, apparent early in Levi's life, manifested

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1Ibid., p. 2.
itself in a number of ways in the family of his youth. His parents were faithful Christians and looked forward to a fulfillment of the Bible teachings concerning salvation. Levi relates that in the year 1809, only a few days following the death of his grandmother, the mother of his father, his sister became very ill with fever. Levi wrote:

Father and mother were sitting by the bed pondering in their hearts what course to take to obtain a comfortable living for their children, when their attention was aroused by the sound of three strokes made on the floor. It was like a whip stalk laid on the floor, heavy, three times. 'There', said Mother, 'one more from this family must go.' In three days our baby sister Amy died, 9th of September, 1809, just two years and one day old. I tried to follow them to the grave to bury her but couldn't go for I had the ague and fever...The Presbyterian minister preached the funeral sermon. When he first saw the baby my mother said to him, 'I want you to tell me what you think about the child. Do you think she will be saved?' The minister said, 'I cannot tell; it depends wholly on this, has it been baptized or not?' Mother said, 'I have not had a chance to have it done.' He said, 'Amen. The state of your child is very uncertain.' At these words my mother's countenance fell. Mother was broken-hearted and took to the Bible reading most of the time. She was sick from the shock of this minister.

As many parents have done at hearing similar words from a minister, Levi's mother grieved for some time. It was a year before she would talk of Jesus Christ or this incident. But Levi began to hear observations made about this minister. He wrote: "I recollect one day I said, 'It was a pity that there had not been a Zebub put to the end of his name, which caused quite a laugh."2

This incident never left the mind of Levi's mother and she

1Tbid., p. 5-6.
2Tbid., p. 6.
worried about the fate of her baby constantly. She prayed a great deal and one night, Levi records: "...she came to my room and said, 'I shall never have to worry again.' 'Why?' asked father. 'The Lord has made it known to me,' she said. 'How did he make it known to you?' my father questioned. 'I went out after it had thundered and lightened. I asked the Lord to let a certain light appear on the ground in a certain place, if all was well with my child, and it came and then went away. Then appeared again. I asked if she was saved show it again. It came as I desired so I know all is well and I shall never worry again.'\(^1\) This occurred about two or three years after the death of the child.

This incident and many others of a spiritual nature served to make Levi a firm believer in God and the Bible and in divine manifestations. He gained much faith in the possibility of the power of God being shown to those who were faithful. On one occasion when he was about in his tenth or eleventh year, he wrote, that he had a "pleasing dream and tasted the white oil from that white decanter from the lovely hand of the person who presented it."\(^2\) He said the Lord appeared to him and gave him the oil and that it filled his system with the "love of God and made him satisfied." It is very clear that he considered it a divine manifestation which was of great comfort to him.

Growing Up and the Beginning of Change

Because of the hard times and frequent illness of his mother,

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 9.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 12.
Levi was hired out to other men during the various seasons. He chopped wood, ran errands, and did other kinds of work for what little pay he could get. His father also made several more moves to different farms and during the summer seasons he worked hard on his father's farm. Life was difficult for them. Levi recorded in his journal that during the famine of 1813 "flour could not be had at any price—the corn was cut off by the frost. We had potato tops and pigweeds, cowslips for greens without meat or bread."¹

During the summer of 1816 Levi learned the woodworking trade, or carpentering, while working with Laurence Seamer, who was "one of the most ingenious men to work in wood."² Levi made a lathe and during different times in his youth he made furniture for his parents. He also built them a house and furnished it with money from his own earnings. He was considerate of his parents and often went out of his way to do some good turn to please his mother, particularly. There seems to have been a good relationship between him and his parents, and he evidently loved them a great deal.

During his youth Levi learned to read and to write. He received help from his mother and from a short time spent in school. Mostly he acquired writing skills through his own initiative. He had a desire to keep a journal and maintain a record for the benefit of his posterity. Concerning this he wrote the following:

...hereafter find a true statement of affairs shall be had in remembrance that it may be handed down from generation to generation that those of my blood and kindred may profit if they will. I have writing and dates which I am transcribing

¹Ibid., p. 13.
²Ibid., p. 15.
and calculate to condense my history in books instead of leaves of paper. I am now determined to serve God and do all the good I can in this world while I live. I have been writing ever since I was fourteen years old. The way I learned to write was to hold letters and imitate them as near as I could. What I have written is the truth as near as I can tell the story.¹

Hancock had good intentions, but unfortunately what records he did write were not compiled into books during his lifetime.²

During the years of the War of 1812, the Hancock family was living in western New York, not far from the scenes of the battles of the Great Lakes. Levi's elder brother, Thomas, fought in the war and at one time the family thought he was killed, but he returned, much to their joy. The scenes of blood and carnage of the war are described by Levi in his journal. In the year 1819 Hancock and some of his family passed through this area and witnessed the destruction that was still much in evidence on the battleground. Thomas described the battles in which he had fought there.

Early in the year 1819 Levi's father, Thomas, decided to sell his farm and move westward. In April of that year they arrived in the town of Chagrin, Ohio. This move was to change the whole course of Levi's life, for it was in this state of Ohio that he later met the Mormon Elders and became a faithful convert to the Mormon Church.

During the next year he helped his father on the new farm and

¹Ibid., p. 20.

²Levi W. Hancock did write and keep detailed journals most of his life until he arrived in Utah. If he kept diaries after coming to Utah this writer has been unable to locate them. There are reports by several of his descendants that he became afflicted with arthritis and was partially paralyzed, which made him unable to write. Mosiah recorded that his father became paralyzed on his right side and was unable to hold his hand still. (See Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 53.)
worked out at various jobs, but he began to want to be more independent and go out on his own. Therefore, in the spring of 1820, Levi

...sat down and wrote the following: April the 11th...1820. Know all men by these presents that I Thomas Hancock of the town of Chagrin and County of Cuyahoga and State of Ohio, do hereby give unto my son, Levi W. Hancock, his time and from this time until he is of age and furthermore I give unto him all his earnings in testimony thereof I have set my hand and set my seal. Thomas Hancock. My father signed this the same day.1

This is an interesting way of making an official break from home. He set out "without purse or scrip" into the wide world, not knowing where to go. He eventually found his way to the home of his married sister in Lebanon, now called New Lyme. Clarissa had married Samuel Algers. He was very kind to Levi and encouraged him in writing and music. Levi played the fife and flute and sometimes the violin. Samuel was a member of the Ohio Militia and when in training, Levi would play for and feast with the officers. Here can be noted, perhaps, the beginning of Levi's musical training which he was to use much in his lifetime. He became quite accomplished with the fife. When he joined the Mormon Battalion he was appointed a musician to Company E because of his musical ability.

Levi also practiced his carpenter's trade in New Lyme. He built several houses and a school, in addition to some furniture. He also bought a farm with hay, grain, sheep and fruit trees from his earnings and apparently prospered. In his own words: "I had cash in my pocket. I had all the things I wanted to make me comfortable. I wore the best clothes and all around me was [sic] my friends."2

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1Ibid., p. 23.
2Ibid., p. 29.
It is hoped that Hancock enjoyed this brief time of prosperity, for he was soon to endure hardships and to lack material goods. His life's pathway was soon to change.

In the fall of 1830 Levi decided to return for a visit to Chagrin. It was here that he made his first contact with the new religion that was to change his life so drastically. His brother Alva told him that four men had come to the town with a book that they called a history and a record of the people who once inhabited this land. Hancock was immediately interested as his brother explained the doctrine he had learned. Levi recorded their conversation as follows:

"Why do you not recollect of reading what the Savior said, how he had other sheep which were not of this fold at Jerusalem? "Oh yes I do," said I. "Well," said he, "they were here and he came and taught them the same doctrine that he taught them at Jerusalem." "And" said he, "they baptize for the remission of sins and are building up the church as the apostles used to do in the days of Christ. Tomorrow they are holding a meeting at Mr. Jackson's in Mayfield. Yes, they lay hands on those they baptize and bestow on them the Holy Ghost." At these last words I gathered faith and there seemed to fall on me something pleasant and delightful...The first word I said was, "It is the truth, I feel it. I will go and hear for myself..."1

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1 Ibid., p. 36.
CHAPTER III
CONVERSION AND EARLY CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Hancock Becomes a Mormon

As Levi sat in the meeting in which four Mormon missionaries preached the doctrines of their new church, he was quickly caught up with what they said. The missionaries read from their new book, The Book of Mormon. They quoted part of the 11th chapter of Isaiah from the Bible which related to their doctrine and asked if anyone would like to reply to their teachings. Two of the missionaries were Parley P. Pratt and Sidney Rigdon. Pratt and others were on a special mission to the American Indian, or "Lamanite", as referred to by the Book of Mormon, for the newly-organized Mormon Church. They had been called by Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, to journey to the "borders of the Lamanites", which was in the state of Missouri. Pratt and Rigdon had been associates in the Church of the Disciples, or Campbellites. The journey of this mission took them "through northeastern Ohio, the scene of Sidney Rigdon's active ministry as a preacher in the Church of the Disciples."\(^1\)

It was natural that Pratt should seek out his former friend and tell him of his new religion. Through the efforts of Pratt and the missionaries Rigdon had joined the Church and then gone proselyting with them. Only a few days later Hancock heard the two men preaching their religion.

The Lamanite mission remained in the city of Kirtland several weeks, making preaching trips into the surrounding towns, of which Chagrine was one. "During the two or three weeks the Lamanite mission remained in Kirtland and vicinity they baptized one hundred and twenty-seven souls." 1 Among these were Levi W. Hancock, his father, and sister Clarissa.

After listening to these men speak of their new religion, Levi wrote: "I sat with both ears open for the first word he spoke. I believed all he said as much as though I knew he was Jesus Christ... Parley P. Pratt then said, 'If anyone wants to be baptized, let them come forward.' My father went and was baptized and also my sister Clarissa and some few others." 2 Levi could not decide to be baptized that day, but waited until the next. He discovered, however, that the two men had returned to Kirtland. The following day Levi set out for Kirtland, and finding Parley P. Pratt, he requested baptism. "I dismounted my horse and went and asked Parley P. Pratt if he would baptize me. He said he would if I believed. I told him I believed that Jesus is the Son of God, and felt within my heart that the things he had told us were the truth. He then baptized me. I thanked him and got on my horse and started to go." 3 Levi was now twenty-seven years old. 4

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1Ibid., p. 231.

2Levi Hancock Diary, p. 36-37.

3Ibid., p. 38.

4Hancock did not record the date of his baptism, though he did give the month as November, 1830. Jenson's Encyclopedia, however, gives the date as November 16. (See Andrew Jenson, L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia, Vol. I, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1901), p. 188.
Levi induced Oliver Cowdery and Lyman Wight, other early leaders in the Church, to return to Mayfield with him and preach to the people at the home of a Mr. Jackson where Hancock had heard the Gospel preached.

Levi's journal records:

I soon arrived at Mr. Jackson's and called the people together. Oliver did not come until we went after him. He came and talked awhile. Lyman Wight and myself had been talking to the people the first evening I came. It was the next day before Oliver Cowdery and Ziba Peterson and one of the Whitmores [Whitmers] came. They held meetings and baptized some and in the evening they confirmed many members in the Church. The next morning I was ordained an Elder. I then went home to my father's and soon after I went to Rome and commenced to hold meetings. The people appeared to be astonished at the doctrine but did not persecute as they did in some other places. This was in the year of 1830 in the month of November, I preached from place to place where the folks were well acquainted with me. Not long after I came to Rome, lies began to circulate through the land concerning the church. This caused the people to be more cold. However, some believed that there was something in the doctrine worthy of notice.\(^1\)

Thus began a new course in Levi Hancock's life which he faithfully followed until his death. He continued "to preach the gospel successfully in the surrounding country."\(^2\) Due partly to the activities of three "Mormon Elders" preaching in the same area, Levi met with some scepticism among some of the people. These elders had carried on rather violently while under the influence of the "Spirit" and had caused some disgrace to the Church. Hancock also claimed to have had a dream in which Jesus appeared and told him to bear testimony to the world of this work. Levi commented humorously in his journal: "They said I was honest and the dream I had they did not doubt but the doctrine was false. One girl said she would rather go to hell than believe it, and in a short

\(^{1}\text{Ibid., p. 29.}\)

\(^{2}\text{Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, p. 188.}\)
time she died. I could not help thinking she was taken at her word."

**Journey to Missouri**

In May, 1831, Levi went to Kirtland where the Prophet Joseph Smith had established the headquarters of the Church. He had met Joseph Smith the February previous. Hancock's brother, Solomon, and Zebedee Coltrin urged him to go to Kirtland. Arriving the last of May they learned that some meetings of the Elders were to be held beginning June 3. Several callings were given to the elders of the Church at this time. Among those receiving calls were Levi Hancock and Zebedee Coltrin. Levi recorded that on June 5th "we held a meeting that night. A revelation came from the Prophet Joseph to many Elders to go to Missouri and preach by the way. Among the rest was my name with Zebedee Coltrin. This was a trial indeed, for I had not thought of being called upon to go so far...We immediately started on our labors. We traveled west through Brownhelm." ²

Roberts refers to this conference of the Church in his volume of Church history. He records that: "During the conference a revelation was received appointing by name twenty-eight elders to travel through the western country in pairs, preaching the Gospel by the way, baptizing and confirming by the water's side those who would receive the truth." ³

It can be safely assumed that this is the same revelation referred to in Levi Hancock's diary and that Levi and Zebedee Coltrin were among the

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1Levi Hancock Diary, p. 41.
2Ibid., p. 51.
pairs of elders chosen in the revelation. Further evidence is found in one of Joseph Smith's revelations wherein it reads: "Let my servants Levi W. Hancock and Zebedee Coltrin also take their journey."\(^1\)

Probably the main purpose of this mission to which these elders had been called was to search out and consecrate Missouri as a land of Zion. The revelations of Joseph Smith refer to it as the land of "inheritance" for the Saints, a land where they shall build their new Zion.\(^2\) Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were to be among those who were to go on this mission, and they believed that the Lord would reveal to them the place of the Saints' inheritance in Missouri.

Levi Hancock and Zebedee Coltrin had a variety of experiences during this journey.\(^3\) Levi became a little discouraged and homesick as the journey began. The thoughts of such a long journey from home left him somewhat bewildered. As they began to meet people and find success in their labors they became happier and more enthusiastic about their work. On one occasion a woman gave him a new pair of socks just at the time his had worn out. This touched him deeply, for he recorded that he thought no one had ever given him anything before in his life.\(^4\)

On another occasion in the town of Winchester, a group of people wrote them a letter and threatened to harm them if they did not leave town by ten o'clock the next morning. After talking it over, both Levi and Zebedee decided to stay and preach to a meeting they had scheduled

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\(^1\) Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 52:29. Joseph Smith claimed to receive revelations from the Lord. Hancock, with other Mormons, accepted them as valid.

\(^2\) Ibid., Sec. 52:5, l2.

\(^3\) Hancock's journal contains twenty-two typewritten pages of accounts of this experience.

\(^4\) Levi Hancock Diary, p. 55.
for an hour later. Some of the signers of the threat were in the audience, but Levi preached to them about his right to enjoy liberty in this land, for his father had fought for it and his relative, John Hancock, was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence. He then commenced to tell them of his Gospel, and following the meeting seventeen of the people were baptized, some of whom had signed the letter.  

Levi and Zebedee traveled on, performing successful missionary labors in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. They baptized "upwards of one hundred souls." While they were in Boone County, Missouri, Levi became so ill that he could continue no longer. After finding lodging and care for him with a Thomas Threlkill, Zebedee continued to Jackson County, the "New Zion." When he was well enough, Levi made some furniture as payment for the nursing he had received.

Finally, in November of 1831, he made his way to Jackson County, where he found his companion, Zebedee Coltrin. While there he participated in the preparatory work done for the building of Zion.  

This took the form of several important tasks, including a building for a printing press. He wrote: "In a short time Oliver and David Whitmer came, and Brother Gilbert told them I was just the man to build the printing works. I told them if they knew how they wanted it done, I could do it. Oliver gave me the plans and I began to work on it and was soon finished. I was able to build many things for the Brethren in this place." The printing works which Levi was instrumental in building

1Ibid., p. 57.
2Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, p. 188.
3Levi Hancock Diary, p. 67. See also Doctrine & Covenants, Sec. 57:8-13.
was for publishing a periodical of the Church in Missouri, to be called the \textit{Evening and Morning Star}. Sidney Gilbert and William W. Phelps had been appointed to acquire a printing press\textsuperscript{1} and Gilbert had sought Hancock's assistance\textsuperscript{2} in some of the construction, no doubt due to his carpenter's skill.

Joseph Smith had arrived in Missouri prior to the arrival of Levi and had designated the site of Zion and the Temple that was to be built by the Saints. The town called Independence in Jackson County was to be the center of the gathering place for the Saints.\textsuperscript{3} Joseph Smith, in one of his revelations on this subject, stated that the "spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse."\textsuperscript{4}

Joseph Smith had held a conference on August 1, but because many of the elders from Kirtland had not yet arrived, "arrangements were made by which upon their arrival another conference was to be held, at which Bishop Edward Partridge would preside, after which the elders were to return to the East bearing testimony by the way of what they had learned concerning Zion."\textsuperscript{5}

Hancock evidently felt he had contributed his part to the furthering of the work of the Church in Independence. He recorded that he


\textsuperscript{2}Though not clearly stated in his journal, it can be safely assumed that Levi built the structure for supporting and housing the press.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 254.

\textsuperscript{4}Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 57:3.

\textsuperscript{5}Roberts, \textit{loc. cit.}, p. 256.
had a feeling in answer to his prayers that "God was my friend and I had faith given to me and there came a light and entered into my head and body. I thought I could see out of my fingers as well as my eyes. I had my eyes quickened. I could see as well again as I ever could before." He had never fully recovered from his illness while in Boone County. He felt, therefore, that this healing was a sign of God's acceptance of his work on this mission.

The return to Kirtland, Ohio, was a long and cold winter trek. Levi's companions were Parley P. Pratt, John Murdock and Lyman Wight, during different times on the return trip. They endured the hardships of winters, suffering from cold, hunger, lack of lodgings and sickness. When they did find lodging it usually was poor and inadequate. The homes of many of the people on the frontier area of this time did not appear to have been much better than the out-of-doors. Of this journey and the conditions Pratt's journal reads:

...the next morning I started in company with Elder Levi Hancock, a journey of twelve hundred miles on foot...After wading through snow about six inches deep for some 10 miles, I was able to address a congregation for the first time in several months. I now parted with Levi Hancock and had John Murdock for a fellow traveler. We passed down the south side of the Missouri River. Among a thin settlement of people--mostly very ignorant but extremely hospitable. Some families were entirely clothed in skins without any other clothing, including ladies young and old. Buildings were generally without glass windows and the door open in winter for light.2

Levi described them as follows:

The people...managed more like beasts than humans. They had dogs, horses, cows and pigs and chickens in abundance around the house and in the house, and mixed together, in the cold weather doors were open night and day. Snow flying and wind

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1Levi Hancock Diary, p. 68.
blowing through the cracks were not chinked. They used rags for beds, ground for floors. The children were ragged and dirty. They had corn pudding and dogger to eat with a little bacon and sassafras tea.\(^1\)

**Activities in Kirtland**

Hancock and his companions arrived back in Ohio in the late spring of 1832. Levi returned to Rome, his home prior to the march, only to discover most of his property destroyed. Taking up carpentering and painting he was soon able to provide clothing, a wagon, and other necessities and needs of life for himself.

Some little time later Hancock went to Kirtland at the request of Joseph Smith, where he engaged in a number of activities. Hancock became well-acquainted with Joseph Smith and he gained a great deal of affection for the Prophet. There grew a firm bond of devotion between the two men. Joseph was often in financial straits and frequently found himself criticized and abused. Levi always upheld Joseph and gave generously of his means to help the Prophet. Of Joseph's plight and frequent adversity Hancock wrote:

He needed money and so I filled his hand with all the remains of my property in Rome. He said he would give me his note for it. I told him he was welcome to it...The Prophet was often in trouble, if his friends gave him money, he was stripped of it by all his enemies. I know for I did all I could to hold up that good man. My heart would ache for him. He had to stand against thousands of his pretended friends seeking to over-throw him. It was terrible the abuse he suffered.\(^2\)

Joseph Smith and the Saints in Kirtland were victims of the Panic of 1837. This depression was economically disastrous to the entire

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\(^1\)Levi Hancock Diary, p. 70.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 74.
nation. Smith lost his money when the bank he had organized in Kirtland failed.

Joseph probably appreciated Hancock, who always supported and upheld him. Hancock's journal contains several accounts which tell of the close association of the two men. Joseph counseled and directed Hancock, who in turn aided the Prophet in many ways. One of Joseph's requests sent Levi on a short-term mission into Pennsylvania preaching the Gospel.

Hancock's move to Kirtland began another time of concentrated activity in the Church. Other affairs of the church in which he participated included the building of the Temple in Kirtland, the march of Zion's Camp, and the School of the Prophets. Each of these events have become prominent in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A chronology of the Church compiled by a church historian, Andrew Jenson, more than a half-century later, records for the year 1833: "During this year the First Presidency of the Church was organized and the translation of the Bible finished by the Prophet Joseph; the cornerstones of the Kirtland Temple were laid, and the Saints driven by a mob from their homes in Jackson County, Mo."

School of the Prophets

The School of the Prophets was organized by Joseph Smith for the purpose of schooling the elders of the Church in religious and secular learning. Of this school Roberts wrote:

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In the winter of 1833 a school, called the "School of the Prophets" was organized, at which both secular instruction was imparted and the spiritual blessings of the Gospel enjoyed. During this period of mental and spiritual exaltation the Prophet, with the aid of his scribes, was revising the Bible. There were frequent meetings held at which there were exhortations to righteousness given.  

Furthermore, "the school was founded for the preparation of the ministry of the Church."  

Levi Hancock was in attendance at the school as is noted from his journal, which reads: "I was with him through the translation of the Bible. I went to the School of the Prophets. Orson Hyde was with us this winter. After I finished the schoolroom Joseph offered to let me trade out of Whitney's Store."  

Building of the Kirtland Temple  

In the forepart of the year 1833 the Mormons were "commanded" to build a Temple to their Lord. The building of the Kirtland Temple was a trial for the Mormons. Hancock's situation, that of having few material goods, was typical of most of the members, but they had time and labor to contribute, and like Levi, most of them were generous. Roberts said the first steps towards the building of the Kirtland Temple were taken on the fourth of May when a conference of High Priests appointed a committee to take into consideration the building of such a house. It was finally decided to erect a building fifty-five by sixty-five feet, inside measurement, two stories in height, and an attic for  

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2Ibid., p. 308.  
3Levi Hancock Diary, p. 74.
classrooms. Ground was broken for the foundation on the fifth of June.\(^1\)

Of this temple work Hancock recorded:

It is now March 1833 and we had not place to worship in. Jared Carter went around with a subscription paper to get signers. I signed up two dollars. He made up a little more than thirty dollars and presented it to Joseph. The Lord would not accept it but gave a command to build a Temple. I helped my father to move to Kirtland. I had married Miss Clarrissa Reed on the 29th of March 1833. I had obligations against the estate of three hundred dollars. I told my folks to sell and send the money to Zion on all they could spare. They did it and I gave up the note. Father bought a place in the town of Kirtland. My wife and I lived with them. I signed a note for fifty dollars toward the Temple and sent to work on the Temple whenever I could...In the fall I had to guard the Temple walls for some men had threatened to tear it down and at times it grew worse and worse.\(^2\)

Through much arduous labor and effort the Mormons completed their Temple in Kirtland in 1836, at the end of three years of construction.

Levi’s contribution to the building of the Kirtland Temple was probably not greater than that of many members of the Church, for the history of the Church indicates that many gave much to this cause. He did give what he felt was his honest share of time and work while he was in Kirtland.

The March of Zion’s Camp

Though many of the Saints worked on the Temple, the march of Zion’s Camp was the work of a limited group of men who were engaged in a special mission. It was from this group of tested and tried men who proved faithful to the Church that the quorums of leaders were later

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\(^2\)Levi Hancock Diary, pp. 76-77.
chosen. Levi Hancock's participation in this march helped prepare him for a position of leadership. The mission of Zion's Camp was to assist the Saints who had settled in Jackson County, Missouri, the place where they believed their "Zion" would be established. In 1831 when Hancock and the twenty-seven other elders had gone to Missouri to claim this area as their land of inheritance, some of them had remained and settled there. These Saints now found themselves in conflict with their neighbors. Their lands were being confiscated by the Missourians among whom they lived, and they and their families were being driven from the county. To all appearances the Mormons were not without blame in the situation in which they now found themselves. The Saints had become more than a little boastful of their mission and eventual destiny in Missouri, and this attitude agitated the Missourians considerably. They in turn, feeling their security was threatened by these newcomers, retaliated, hoping to drive the Mormons away. Joseph Smith recorded the following revelation from the Lord in which He said: "Verily I say unto you, concerning your brethren who have been afflicted, and persecuted, and cast out from the land of their inheritance. I, the Lord have suffered the affliction to come upon them, wherewith they have been afflicted, in consequence of their transgressions."¹

As a result of the difficulties with the Missourians in which the Saints were entangled, the church leaders decided to send assistance to them. Direction was therefore given to the Saints in the East to make preparations for an extensive purchase of lands in Jackson County. Also they were to raise from one to five hundred men to join their exiled

¹Doctrines and Covenants, Sec. 101:1-2.
brethren in Missouri, to accept Governor Dunklin's offer to reinstate
the exiles in their lands, buy out such of the "old settlers" as would
not consent to live with them on terms of friendship, and maintain their
inheritance by force of numbers. This led to the organization of Zion's
Camp. When the Camp gathered in the spring of 1834 it numbered about 150
men, but was increased to about 200 by the time it reached Missouri.1

Levi Hancock, who was a member of this camp, wrote in his
journal:

This was in the fall of 1833. We kept hearing from time to
time of the situation of our friends and learned that many were
settling in Clay County...Joseph said we must go and see them
and if necessary we would fight the mob. He said to me, "Now
you have a wife, don't say you can't go." I said, "My wife
shan't hinder me," and went and bought me a rifle and a sword.
I armed myself for battle. All mechanics were busily engaged in
making implements of war all winter, to be prepared in the spring
to travel to Missouri to replace our brethren upon their land, if
there were law abiding men enough in that state to assist us.

On the ninth of April 1834 we had a son born near the middle
of the day. Lyman White [Wight] named him Mosiah Lyman. I then
began to prepare to travel and on the first of May bid my folks
farewell and started for Carthage County, some forty miles from
Kirtland. Here we gathered and organized for marching. Our
money was then thrown together and put in the hands of those
appointed to buy our provisions. I was appointed cook for Sylv-
ester Smith's mess. In this way we traveled, being directed by
the prophet in peace...2

The purpose of this mission, to relieve the Saints of their prob-
lems, was not accomplished. Governor Dunklin refused to help them re-
cover their stolen lands as he had promised. Robert wrote:

With the governor unwilling to fulfill his engagements to
the exiles by calling out the militia to reinstate them in their

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2Levi Hancock Diary, p. 77.
lands; with the inhabitants of western Missouri deeply prejudiced against them, and greatly excited by the arrival of Zion's Camp; and the brethren of the camp, and the exiled brethren, painfully conscious that the Saints in the eastern branches of the Church had not responded with either sufficient money or men for them to act independently of the governor, take possession of their lands, purchase other lands, and hold them despite the violence of mobs—the necessity of disbanding Zion's Camp, and awaiting some future opportunity for the redemption of Zion, was apparent to the minds of its leaders. Accordingly it was disbanded from its encampment on Rush Creek, in Clay County, on the 21st of June, and word to that effect was officially sent to some of the leading citizens of Clay County.1

The experiences of this march were similar to the previous journey made by Levi and others three years earlier. There were dissensions and rebellions within the camp. There were threats and hostile demonstrations from without. There were weary miles of travel to endure, many hardships to encounter, and disappointments to live through. This was valuable training for men who were to become the leaders of the Church, who were to guide and lead the people across the plains and deserts to the valleys of the mountains in Utah. Levi Hancock undoubt-edly gained experiences and insight into human nature and into the minds of men under these situations that proved valuable to him during his service in the Mormon Battalion, where its members endured many similar privations and hardships.

One of the many difficult experiences of this march was when the disease of cholera spread throughout the camp prior to its disbanding in Missouri. Though Levi did not contract the disease, his brother Joseph did, and Levi attempted to care for him. "Such a time," wrote Levi in his journal, "I never before experienced; neither did I ever

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think I could endure what I then endured." He waited upon Joseph night
and day, minute by minute, until his strength was almost completely
exhausted. "I did this until I thought I could endure no more," he
wrote. Following the completion of the Zion’s Camp march, Levi returned
to Ohio.

I soon bought me a pony and in September I started for home
in Ohio, preaching by the way. I arrived at my father’s house in
November. I then had to work for hay for my horse and cow. My
wife had managed to get along with the baby without running me
in debt. Some had to pay many dollars for their wife’s debts.
I felt thankful for this and loved her dearly. Oh, how sincerely
my heart was swollen with joy while I looked on my lovely son.
We went to live on our place in the woods where we enjoyed our-
selves through the summer. I bought a city lot in town and built
a frame house on it one story and half, with it all payed [sic]
for.2

After such a discouraging journey Hancock was no doubt encouraged
by the frugality and thrift which had been manifest in his own life now
become apparent in his wife also. These qualities were a great asset to
him in being able to manage in the frontier society in which he lived
most of his life.

Ordination to the First Council of Seventies

Though it failed in its originally intended purpose, an important
consequence was realized from Zion’s Camp’s mission. It served to prove
who was loyal and faithful to the Church and its principles. From it
membership came many of the future leaders of the Church. Robert’s
account reads:

In another way also, this Zion’s Camp episode was turned to
good account. On Saturday 11th February, 1835, a two days’ con-
venence or conference was convened, at which, after a week’s

1Levi Hancock Diary, p. 82.

2Ibid., p. 83.
notice, those brethren who had accompanied the Prophet to Missouri in the camp were called together, and it was announced that from their numbers would be chosen the quorum of the twelve apostles and their assistants in the work of the foreign ministry of the Church, the Seventy…The quorum of the twelve are declared to be "equal in authority and power" to the presidency of the church; and the first Quorum of the Seventy form a quorum "equal in authority to the quorum of the twelve apostles."

It was to the latter quorum that Levi Hancock was called. Of the circumstances of the calling of this body, Joseph Smith in his own history wrote: "On the 28th of February, 1835, the Church in council assembled, commenced selecting certain individuals to be Seventies, from the number of those who went up to Zion with me in the camp."2

It was two weeks following the selection of the quorum of the twelve apostles that the seventy were chosen. This organization was effected on the 28th day of February, 1835. The names of the first seven presidents chosen were as follows: Hazen Aldrich, Leonard Rich, Joseph Young, Zebedee Coltrin, Levi W. Hancock, Lyman Sherman, and Sylvester Smith. There turned out to be some misunderstandings, however, on the correct procedure of filling the office of the Seven Presidents of the Seventy. It was apparently overlooked, at the time, that Presidents of the Seventy were to be "chosen out of the number of the Seventy," for it was discovered later that of the above seven men all but Joseph Young and Levi W. Hancock had been High Priests. Therefore, on the 6th of April, 1837, at a general assembly of the priesthood in

### References


3. Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 107:93.
Kirtland, Joseph Smith requested these men who had been High Priests to take their place in the High Priests' quorum. Roberts wrote that:

There is some discrepancy between Joseph Young's account and other writers as to the time when the five high priests, who had been ordained presidents of the Seventy, were transferred to the high priests' quorum. Joseph Young places it in November, 1835; the Prophet in April, 1837. James Foster, Daniel S. Miles, Josiah Butterfield, Salmon Gee and John Gaylord, were ordained to take the place of the five retiring brethren. It was reported that Levi W. Hancock, who was absent from Kirtland at the time, had previously been ordained a high priest, and John Gould was put in his place in the first council. When Elder Hancock returned to Kirtland during the summer of 1837, however, it was ascertained that it was a mistake about his having been ordained a high priest, and John Gould was taken into the high priests' quorum, and Levi W. Hancock was retained in the first council. The first council as finally settled upon in that organization, and at the time stood as follows: Joseph Young, Levi W. Hancock, James Foster, Daniel S. Miles, Josiah Butterfield, Salmon Gee and John Gaylord. 1

It is unfortunate that Levi Hancock did not record anything of this important event in his journal, but it is silent on the subject. He was on the move so much during this time that he apparently was too busy to record the activities of his life. This particular diary ended in the year 1836. His closing paragraph told of his move back to Missouri.

There is ample evidence from records and histories of the Church to establish the authenticity of this organization of the First Council of Seventies. The minutes of later meetings of this body of men show that they became active in Church leadership and that Levi W. Hancock served in the office of one of the Presidents of the Seventy. The following is from the minutes of a General Council of the Priesthood:

May 2, (1835) —A grand council was held in Kirtland, composed of the following officers of the Church, viz: Presidents Joseph

Smith, Jun., David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Joseph Smith, Sen., and Hyrum Smith, with the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Bishop Partridge and counselors, Bishop Whitney and counselors, and some of the Seventies, with their presidents, viz., Sylvester Smith, Leonard Rich, Lyman Sherman, Hazen Aldrich, Joseph Young and Levi Hancock; and many Elders from different parts of the country...It will be the duty of the seven presidents of the first Seventy to call and ordain other Seventies and send them forth to labor in the vineyard, until, if needs be, they set apart seven times seventy, and even until there are one hundred and forty-four thousand thus set apart for the ministry...The circumstances of the presidents of the Seventy were severally considered, relative to their traveling in the vineyard; and it was unanimously agreed that they should hold themselves in readiness to go, at the call of the Twelve, when the Lord opens the way.¹

Again the minutes of this group in August of the same year reveal Hancock's activities in the Council of the Seventy:

A general assembly of the Church of Latter-day Saints was held at Kirtland on the 17th of August, 1835, to take into consideration the labors of a committee appointed by a general assembly of the Church on the 24th of September, 1834, for the purpose of arranging the items of the doctrine of Jesus Christ for the government of the Church...Presidents Leonard Rich, Levi W. Hancock, Sylvester Smith and Lyman Sherman organized the council of the Seventy...Elder Levi W. Hancock being appointed chorister, a hymn was sung, and the services for the day opened by the prayer of President Oliver Cowdery.²

Levi Hancock, as a member of the First Council of Seventy, had by 1835, risen to some degree of leadership in the new Mormon religion. There are questions, however, as to how much leadership or authority this quorum of Seventy possessed. Today this body is considered a group third in line of authority over the Church. Whether or not it was given this importance then is not clear. The above quotations do

²Ibid., pp. 136-7.
indicate some action by this Council which affect the whole Church, as in the case of the arrangement of the items of doctrine. However, the idea is supported by at least one writer, that the position of the First Council of the Seventy has evolved from a body of leadership over the Seventy to a quorum of leadership over the Church "equal in authority" after the quorum of the twelve apostles.\(^1\)

According to Mormon Church scriptures, it had been revealed to Joseph Smith that the quorum of the First Council of the Seventy was a quorum "equal in authority to the quorum of the Twelve Apostles" under the direction of the Twelve whenever their decisions were unanimous.\(^2\) This would appear to place this quorum, of which Levi Hancock was a member, at a high position of leadership.\(^3\) Joseph Smith suggested in his writings:

And it is...the order of the Seventy, that they should have seven presidents to preside over them, chosen out of the number of the Seventy; and the seventh president of these presidents is to preside over the six; and these seven presidents are to choose other Seventy besides the first Seventy to whom they belong, and are to preside over them; and also other Seventy, until seven times seventy, if the labor in the vineyard of necessity requires it.\(^4\)

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\(^1\)James N. Baumgarten, "The Role and Function of the Seventies in L.D.S. Church History," (unpublished Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1960), pp. 16-20. The question of authority of the Council of the Seventy will be discussed more fully in Chapter IV as it applies to Hancock's position in the Mormon Battalion.

\(^2\)Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 107:25, 26, 34.

\(^3\)It is not entirely clear from Church histories and records whether the First Seven Presidents of the Seventy was a body of leadership third in line after the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles over all the Church, or whether they were merely the leadership over all the members of the priesthood of the Church called Seventies.

\(^4\)Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 107:93-96.
It can, at any rate, be concluded that Levi W. Hancock was deeply involved in the activities of the Mormon Church.

The Move to Missouri

Back in Jackson County, Missouri, the Saints and the "old settlers" had continued to find themselves in disagreement over the rights of settlement by the Mormons in the Missouri area. The Zion's Camp march had failed to resolve the situation. Most of the Saints had moved into Clay County, located immediately to the north across the Missouri River. The people of Clay County had welcomed the Mormons as exiles and refugees from persecution. It was with the understanding that the Mormons would remain only temporarily, until such time as circumstances permitted them to return to Jackson County. When it became evident that they were not preparing to return to their Jackson County homes very soon, if at all, the "old settlers" of Clay County expressed some misgivings as to the propriety of permitting the exiles to remain.¹

The citizens felt that they could request the Saints to leave if they became too numerous. Therefore, on June 29, 1836, "...at a mass meeting held at Liberty courthouse, which was widely attended, a series of resolutions was passed that culminated in calling upon the Saints now to fulfill the pledge which their leaders had given some two years previously, by withdrawing from the county."² The minutes of the meeting stated that the people recognized that they had no right under the constitution and laws of the nation to expel them by force, but they foresaw

¹Roberts, Comprehensive History of Church, Vol. I, p. 413.
²Ibid.
the danger of civil war if the Mormons did not leave. The Mormons were told that if they had any gratitude for the friendly hand of assistance shown by the people of Clay County they would not endanger the county with the possibility of civil war.

In a mass meeting of the Saints only two days after that of the people of Clay County, they answered that they would comply with the request of the people of Clay County. They agreed to leave willingly and to stop further emigration of other Saints into the County. The Mormons also accepted the friendly offer of the committee of Clay County to help them in selecting a location to which to move.

Accordingly, with the help of the people of Clay County and at the suggestion and assistance of certain "politicians and public men", a county was created for the express purpose of settling the Mormons in. The new county, Caldwell, was organized in December, 1836, after the Saints had petitioned the legislature for enactment. The previous October a number of Latter-day Saint families had begun to settle on Shoal Creek in what was to become the new county. Caldwell County was a wilderness, which was the reason the Missourians were willing to let the Saints move there. By the spring of 1838 the population was more than five thousand, of which over 4,900 were Latter-day Saints.¹

The main settlement of the Saints was at Far West, located on the highest swell of land in the area, making it visible from a long distance. Here the Mormons found temporary refuge from their Missouri neighbors.

Levi Hancock was caught up in these events of the church. His [journal recorded:

¹Ibid., p. 42h.
I worked at my trade through the summer nearly, [1836] when I heard that the people of Clay county was about to drive our brethren from that county. It was about this time I received a letter from Solomon saying he had married another wife and was going to Missouri. I saw the Prophet Joseph Smith and he told me to take Tommy Algiers and go. I offered my place for sale and sold it before night. I made me a wagon of wood and got it iron rimmed on the wheels and got there about the first of September 1836. We stayed there about one week or more and then started for Missouri. We stopped in Illinois two weeks and laid a floor for a man. He gave us money. We went on to his folks and I went to work for grain & in November I bought me a farm in Caldwell County. I built a house sixteen feet square of logs...I bought and paid for ten acres in the city of Farwest and partly paid for a city lot near the Temple block, where I desired living. I had in all sixty acres of good land besides my city lot paid for. I had cows, hogs and one good mare, sheep and hens a plenty and was in a good way to live with plenty to eat.1

This brief term of peace, which was to be short-lived for Levi and the other Saints, caused him to feel grateful. As he sat in his new home with his babe in his arms he sang a song which he had composed.

Two verses follow:

"Here far in the realm of Missouri
I'll set and sing and tell a story
How many trials I have passed over
Before I found this dwelling in peace.

0 here, here beside the fire
I have my sweet babe and little Mosiah
And here is mother, I'll set me down beside her
And sing, I've found a dwelling in peace."2

Though it is not entirely clear from Levi's own journal, he must have moved from his original home in Caldwell County, Missouri, sometime between 1836 and 1838.3 The lot he mentions having purchased in the city

1Levi Hancock Diary, p. 84.
2Ibid.
3Levi's own journal ends in the year 1836, but the journal of his son, Mosiah, contains many details of the activities of the family during this Missouri period.
of Far West is likely where he built his home. Inference is made that the move of the Hancock family to Far West might have occurred in 1838, for Mosiah's journal contains the following:

We had it tolerably good in our move to Far West. I remember that one night there were sixteen of us little children in one bed. We used to make our bed on the ground, but grandfather and grandmother and some of the children slept in the wagon.

We arrived at our place on Plum Creek about March 30, 1838. There was approximately eight inches of snow on the ground, and not having a tent we were forced to camp in the open for awhile. Father had bought a place from an old Missourian when he had come out of Zion's camp some four years previous.1

The brief peace did come to an end, and the year 1838 is significant in Latter-day Saint Church history because of the great amount of friction that occurred between the Saints and the other Missourians. More and more the differences in religion, culture and politics between these two brought such a rift that living together in peace became impossible. On the 4th of July an event occurred which served only to worsen the situation. The celebration of Independence Day that year at Far West was made a notable event. The saints laid the cornerstone of their temple amid elaborate ceremonies. There was a band of musicians and a long procession in which both militia and church authorities took part, as well as the ladies. A speech was given and a poem of Levi Hancock's was read. Of this event Mosiah recorded: "This season we went up to Far West to celebrate the Fourth of July. Just the day before the celebration the Prophet Joseph asked father to compose a song. He worked on it much in the night and had it ready for the occasion. Uncle Solomon

1Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 3.
Hancock helped father sing the song.1 Two of the twelve verses are:

Come lovers of freedom, to gather
And hear what we now have to say,
For surely we ought to remember
The cause that produced this great day.
Oh, may we remember while singing,
The pains and distresses once born
By those who have fought for our freedom
And often for friends called to mourn.

The lives and the fortunes together
And honors all sacred and dear
Were solemnly all pledged forever
By our honored Forefathers here.
Including the great and the noble
Who in our behalf were so brave
They offered their lives for our freedom
When called for our country to save.2

Perhaps more consequential than the cornerstone of the temple or
the parade was what was afterwards called the "Mormon Declaration of
Independence."3 The Prophet Joseph Smith himself wrote of this occasion:
"The day was spent in celebrating the Declaration of Independence of the
United States of America, and also by the Saints making a 'Declaration
of Independence' from all mobs and persecutions which have been inflicted
upon them time after time, until they could bear it no longer."4

Sidney Rigdon was the orator of the day and he embodied this
"declaration" in his speech. Roberts said: "The speech on the whole is
very admirable, and worthy" but that the keynote of it reached an "unfort-
unate climax."5 Bancroft wrote of the speech: "Sidney Rigdon delivered

1Ibid., pp. 5-6.
2Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 6.
4Smith, Documentary History of Church, Vol. III, p. 111.
5Roberts, loc. cit.
the oration on this occasion; and being an American citizen and one of
the founders of an American religion, it was perhaps natural for him to
indulge in a little Fourth-of-July oratory; it was natural, but under
the circumstances it was exceedingly impolitic. ¹

The point of his speech was that the Saints had put up with all
they could endure from their neighbors and that they were ready to spill
blood to protect their rights and property in the land. While this was
oratorical indignation, brought forth by a sense of outraged justice,
it was a human-like reaction to the situation. And while, as Roberts
suggests, it was probably not the intention of the Saints to carry out
the threats, as proved by later events, it did incite the ire of the
citizens of Missouri. It was a mistake for which the Mormons paid a
heavy price.

Expulsion from Missouri

At length the storm burst. The open hostilities which ultimately
resulted in the expulsion of the Saints from Missouri broke out at an
election in Gallatin in Daviess County on the sixth of August. W. P. Pen-
iston, candidate for representative to the state legislature from Daviess
County had opposed the Saints, and fearing they would not support him in
the election, he appeared at the polls and attempted to prevent them from
voting. There was some scuffling and physical violence as Samuel Brown,
a Mormon, was struck by one of the Missourians. Incidents increased as
the days passed. Feelings became stronger on each side. Misrepresent-
ations against the Mormons were made by groups of people, and threats

¹H. H. Bancroft, _History of Utah_, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft,
1964), p. 120.
were issued until both sides armed themselves. Open hostilities began as the Missourians shot cattle, took prisoners of the Mormons, and harassed them in ways that caused much grief and alarm.

Finally affairs became so serious that Major-General Atchison concluded to call out the militia of Ray and Daviess Counties under Generals Doniphan and Parks. Open warfare had become a reality. The Mormons armed themselves for defense. Hostilities between the two parties were rampant. Both sides had probably gone beyond the point of reconciliation by now. To the Mormons it seemed they were being subjected to outright persecution, while the Missourians felt that the Mormon settlers constituted a threat to them, politically and economically. One history of Missouri describes, at least from one viewpoint, the attitude of the Missourians. It reads:

To take advantage of the necessities of a people so situated...was certainly bad enough; but what adds immeasurably to the shame of the transaction is the fact that there are grounds for believing that not a little of the intolerance shown on this occasion may have been due to a desire on the part of the Gentiles to get possession of the Mormons' lands.¹

The Saints made petitions to the legislature of Missouri and to the Governor to no avail. Governor Boggs of Missouri issued orders not to protect the Saints, and in the final stages of the conflict issued orders of extermination of the Mormons from the State of Missouri. In the meantime, some Mormons had been murdered, (Haun's Mill massacre, in which over seventeen Mormons were brutally slain, being the most notorious event), their homes were burned, their goods and property stolen,

their women raped, and their constitutional rights denied them. Their Prophet was incarcerated in the Liberty Jail on charges of treason. Following the extermination order of Governor Boggs, there appeared little choice left for them but to leave the state of Missouri.

Therefore, in the dead of winter, during the months of February and March, they trudged on to find a new home, leaving behind their property, most of it a total loss. The choice of where to go was not easy. In Quincy, Illinois, a small group of Mormons had settled. It was here that the Saints found refuge for a time.

Levi Hancock's family, though spared of death, suffered through this period with the rest of the Saints. They were witness to much of the persecution and mobbing. The following extract from the diary of Levi's son, Mosiah, gives an account of some of the conditions that existed during that time:

There was a mob of 1600 camped in the vicinity of Far West. "Judas Iscariot" Hinkle came in and reported the state of affairs in the camp of the mobbers. A person destitute of the Spirit of Christ might think there was something sweet about Hinkle...A few days later, Hinkle formed a brotherhood in a hollow square, and made them cast their arms of defense on the ground. He then delivered the Prophet over to the mob! After they had taken the arms from the brethren, they kept the brethren in the square for three days and two nights without food. The mob became very brave after they had taken the brethren's arms. One of their officers complimented the men for their bravery, and said, "Now you can go and do as you please with their women." Many of them left with the intention of committing rapine. When the terrified women ran out to escape those brutal fiends, it was more than the men in the square could stand. They ran out to protect their loved ones; then the mobbers turned loose and shot down men, women and children. They shot the children because they said

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1 Robert, Comprehensive History of Church, Vol. I, pp. 487-8. Both Roberts and Hancock give accounts of Mormon maidens being ravished by some of these men. Each tells of girls being strapped to benches and repeatedly attacked until they died. Roberts cites affidavits as evidence.
that "nits make lice." After the brethren had delivered up their arms, father mounted his horse Turk, and rode off to Adam-On-Diahmon [sic]. A party of forty-two of the mobs cavalry started in pursuit of father. A whisper came to him, "Go thru the Hale thicket, then turn to the left." This he did, and it brought him in the rear of the gang that was pursuing him. He said to one of the men in the rear, "Where has that fellow gone?" "I don't know," was the answer, "but we will soon catch him." Father stopped his horse and pretended to tighten his saddle-girth, and then he escaped from his pursuers.

The night before the surrender, mother had run 250 bullets for father's rifle. Father and his brothers, and a few others, did not give up their rifles. There were sixteen guns that were not surrendered. The owners taking their 16 guns into the thicket caused more consternation against the mob than all the mobber's guns caused against the Saints. But trouble had started. The nation with "eagle wings" was to make war on the Saints and over come them. The saints soon had to start forth to please the State of Missouri.

One day about twenty women met in the home of the mother of Prophet Joseph Smith. Some said, "Now that the mob has taken our guns, what shall we do?" I remember part of the speech my mother spoke. "We can do as the Carthage women did when the Romans took the arms off their husbands; we can pull the hair out of our heads so the men folks can make bowstrings."

It is a fact which should be remembered—the Hancock brothers, Levi, Joseph, and Solomon, with their guns guarded and fed 600 men, women, and children while camped in the woods after they had been driven from their homes. They were waiting for an opportunity to get away. I saw the Prophet marched away; and I saw, Oh, the scenes I witnessed! I do not think people would believe them, so I will forbear. The howling fiends, although they wore the uniform of the U. S., they were not to be trusted. So some of the brethren made three hundred tomahawks for protection.¹

Mosiah Hancock continued to relate other acts of crime and violence committed by the Missourians against the Mormons. While these atrocities were terrible, causing much suffering to the Saints, it must be remembered that they were not isolated cases of these times. Missouri was the frontier of America during this time. Life was rugged, the

¹Mosiah Hancock Journal, pp. 12-13. See Roberts, Comprehensive History of Church, Chapter 35 for similar accounts.
people crude, ignorant and extremely uncultured. This type of behavior was not vented upon the Mormons simply because they were Mormons. Frontier people reacted to any way of life that seemed to threaten their own. They had similarly persecuted other emigrants prior to the arrival of the Mormons. Other conflicts occurred on the western frontier due to politics or slavery or some other problem. The results to human life were much the same as that which occurred to the Mormons. The "bleeding of Kansas" is a case in point, where many lost their lives as a result of the slavery issue. Nor is history without other religious persecutions. For example, during the Catholic Inquisition of the sixteenth century, thousands of Protestants in the Netherlands were executed, and tens of thousands driven into exile because the Dutch were a religious and political threat to the Spanish.

**The Nauvoo Period - Peace and Expulsion**

The journey of approximately fifteen thousand people, all refugees from a state in which they were unwanted, was undoubtedly an interesting sight. Speaking of the question of where to go and how they get there, Bancroft wrote:

> Whither can they go? There is a small following of the Prophet at Quincy, Illinois; some propose to go there, some start for other places. But what if they are not welcome at Quincy, and what can they do with such a multitude? There is no help for it, however, no other spot where the outcasts can hope for refuge at the moment. Some have horses and cattle and wagons; some have none. Some have tents and bedding; some have none. But the start is made, and the march is slowly to the eastward. In the months of February and March over one hundred and thirty families are on the west bank of the Mississippi unable to cross the river which is full of floating ice. There they wait and suffer; they scour the country for food and clothing for the destitute; many sicken and die. Finally they reach Quincy, and are kindly received.¹

Levi Hancock and his family found themselves in the circumstances of the majority of the Saints in this trek from Missouri to Illinois. Food was scarce and they battled the elements of the winter out in the open. The journal of Mosiah Hancock records the raw conditions of the Hancock family:

We gathered elmbark to eat with our corn on the cob—elmbark and buds helped us get along until we came to the Mississippi River. There we camped for the night because we didn't know how to cross the river. Oh! what a cold night it was. Tom had some buds and limbs to browse on; and we still had some corn left. We found some were good roasted, but I was glad to eat what I could find raw. We also had elmbark which was a luxury with corn. The next morning the river was frozen over with ice—great blocks of frozen ice all over the river, and it was slick and clear. That morning we crossed over to Quincy, Illinois. I being barefoot and the ice so rough, I staggered all over. We finally got across, and were so glad, for before we reached the other side, the river had started to swell and break up. Father said, "Run, Mosiah," and I did run. We all just made it on the opposite bank when the ice started to snap and pile up in great heaps, and the water broke thru.¹

The Hancock family did not settle in Quincy but went on to Commerce, later renamed Nauvoo by the Prophet. It was here that the Mormons built a large city on the banks of the Mississippi River at a place where it makes a big bend. Levi and his family "left Quincy on February 9, 1839, and arrived at Commerce on the 11th."²

The Mormons were allowed to live in peace for a time. They endured many privations and difficulties during the first few years as they were establishing and building their new city. They were to enjoy this new peace for about five years. During this time they built the Nauvoo Temple, created an army known as the Nauvoo Legion, obtained a charter to establish a university, built many fine homes, and engaged in many

¹Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 17.
²Ibid.
other prosperous activities. Nauvoo became the largest city in Illinois at that time. The population has been estimated at about twenty thousand people; however, a recent authority has placed it at only eleven thousand.\(^1\) Its fame—or notoriety—whichever it happened to be considered, became widely known over the United States during this period.

Levi W. Hancock participated in many of the activities of the building of Nauvoo. Andrew Jenson said of him: "After the founding of Nauvoo he became a prominent and energetic citizen of that place, where he also acted as a police officer."\(^2\) There were forty police officers in Nauvoo. Hosea Stout was chief of police, according to Juanita Brooks, who edited his diary.\(^3\) This was an active police force which was responsible for the safety of church leaders during the crises that came to Nauvoo.\(^4\) Hancock helped to protect them in this role. He was especially watchful of the Prophet. Mosiah in his writings gave the following about his father's activities in Nauvoo: "It was my father's fortune to be kind to the poor, to preach the Gospel, to guard the prophet, and to work on the temple."\(^5\) The friendship between Levi and Joseph Smith continued in Nauvoo. Joseph spent considerable time in Hancock's home. Mosiah played and wrestled with him. Joseph was fond of wrestling and other physical games. The Hancocks also benefited from his advice and counsel on matters con-

\(^1\) Edgar Lyon, in address to Utah Valley Chapter of Utah State Historical Society, December, 1965. (Dr. Lyon is director of Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.)

\(^2\) Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, p. 169.


\(^4\) Ibid., p. xviii.

\(^5\) Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 25.
carning the church. Needless to say, Levi and Mosiah became very fond of the Prophet. Mrs. Brooks stated that the Hancock brothers, Solomon and Levi, "at Nauvoo lived near the home of Joseph Smith and he visited them so often that people generally recognized that they had the full confidence of the prophet."\(^1\)

During his residence in Nauvoo Levi Hancock apparently continued to exercise his musical skill. Hosea Stout recorded in his diary several occasions when Hancock "played his fiddle for an hour" to the satisfaction of a gathering, or that "Levi Hancock amused us with tunes on his violin."\(^2\)

During the early period of Nauvoo, before prosperity came, there was still much sickness and scarcity of food and goods. Levi was ill a great deal of the time also, but when he was well enough he made coffins for those who had not survived the ordeals. At one time people died so fast that he worked day and night to keep up with the demand for coffins.\(^3\) Often the only food the Hancock family had was greens, and even basswood buds and elm bark, and grass eaten raw.

While the Mormons were living in Nauvoo, Levi filled two missions for his Church. The first took place during the early forties when he went to Indiana to preach the gospel. While there he converted a number of people to the Church.\(^4\) The second mission was to Vermont during the early part of the year 1844.\(^5\)

It was during this year of 1844 that conditions began to grow

\(^1\)Brooks, op. cit., p. 172.

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 58 and 72.

\(^3\)Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 19.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 20.

\(^5\)Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, p. 189.
worse again for the Mormons after a few short years of relative peace and prosperity. Many of the similar conditions that had arisen in Missouri now re-occurred in Illinois. The Saints were prosperous and perhaps somewhat proud. Their religion and prosperity and political superiority in numbers brought them into conflict with their neighbors. Added to this situation was the problem of traitors within the Church. Some men apostatized from the Church and worked on the side of the "enemy". On April 18, 1844, Levi Hancock sat on a council with other Church authorities and excommunicated from the Church William and Wilson Law and Dr. Robert D. Foster, two of the several dissenting groups who fought against the Church.  

On June 27, 1844, the Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith, was killed while in the Carthage County Jail, by a mob of men with blackened faces.

From this time on conditions grew worse between the Mormons and the people of the surrounding counties and cities. Mosiah Hancock recorded that sometime during this period, "the mob had burned our home and everything in it, even the feather bed mother was unable to get out of the house."

Finally the Mormons could resist no longer. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, who was president of the Twelve Apostles, the Mormons began to evacuate Nauvoo during February of 1846. Once again during the winter they were forced to leave their homes and find refuge elsewhere because of their conflicts with their neighbors. The Saints had decided to travel westward beyond the confines of the United States at that time. Their destination was somewhere in the Great Basin where they hoped they could settle and live unmolested.

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1Smith, Documentary History of the Church, Vol. VI, p. 407.
2Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 33.
Because of the difficult conditions and the bad weather, the Saints did not travel far the first year of 1846, but instead camped along the trail in Iowa in small settlements. Of the Saints who left Nauvoo, the bulk of them reached the Missouri River where winter camps were made. Two important encampments were Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Winter Quarters or Florence, Nebraska. There they stayed during the summer and winter of 1846-47. Prior to the arrival of most of the Mormons in Winter Quarters, while great numbers were still scattered along the trail in temporary camps, a call came from the United States government. This call was a request for a unit of 500 soldiers from the Mormons to fight in the War with Mexico. This was an additional reason the Mormons delayed in going farther west that year. This request was to make a considerable change in the life of Levi Hancock. Concerning this time his son Mosiah wrote:

We went back to Sugar Creek, where my father, George Myers, Andrew Little and myself were detained to make wagons for the poor. So it was quite late when we left. Besides we had rain every day while there. Oh! the storms! When we did get ready to start, Father would take us on one day's travel; then the next day he would go back and get Grandmother Reed and Uncle Levi and Uncle Ira. And father would bring them all up so we would all be together at night. Thus father traveled, and kept the two families along by traveling the road over three times until we caught up with the Pioneers at Counsel Point. We got there just in time for President Young, Kimball, and Richards, to come and choose father to go and spiritually preside over the Mormon Battalion. 1

Here a new and interesting chapter in the life of Levi Hancock began to unfold. While his family went on with the majority of the Saints under Brigham Young, Levi enrolled in the Mormon Battalion. This experience was to cause him joy, sadness, many hardships, difficulties with some of his brethren, and much valuable training for his future life.

1Ibid., The nature of the authenticity of this call is discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER IV

THE MARCH OF THE MORMON BATTALION

The Call for a Mormon Battalion

Few events in the history of military campaigns are as unusual as the call and march of the Mormon Battalion.1 Its commander, Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke, said of the Battalion at the journey's end that history might be searched in vain for an infantry march equal to that performed by the Battalion.2 General Kearney also paid tribute to the Battalion, saying: "Napoleon crossed the Alps, but these men have crossed a continent."3

Even the call for the men of the Battalion could not easily be paralleled in history. The Mormons as a Church or a religious body were asked to give five hundred of their best men to the service of the United States in the War with Mexico in 1846. This call was unique in that seldom in history has a religious group been called to form a military unit of solely its own members. The call was also extraordinary in that it

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2Tyler, Mormon Battalion, page 281.

3Ibid., page 281-282.
came at a time when the Mormons had just been "expelled" from the confines of the United States by mobs who had not been checked by the law officers of the United States or the State of Illinois, from which they were driven. The Mormons were being asked to take up arms in defense of a country which many felt had not given just treatment to their people. A further feature was that the request for five hundred Mormon men came at a time when they were least prepared to provide them. The Mormons were camped on the prairies of Iowa and Nebraska in scattered quarters, having just endured a difficult winter since February of 1846. Their provisions were meager and they found themselves in an otherwise destitute condition. All the able-bodied men were desperately needed to prepare and improve the condition of their camps.1

When the call was issued, Brigham Young, leader of the Mormon refugees, said: "...I would rather have undertaken to raise two thousand

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1In a speech before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania on March 26, 1850, Colonel Thomas L. Kane outlined the history of the Mormons from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. In his description of the call of the Mormon Battalion he reveals somewhat the plight of the Saints in responding to this call. He said, "The call could hardly have been more inconveniently timed. The young, and those who could best have been spared, were then away from the main body, either with pioneer companies in the van, or, their faith unannounced, seeking work and food about the north-western settlements, to support them till the return of the season for commencing emigration. The force was therefore to be recruited from the fathers of families, and others, whose presence it was most desirable to retain.

There were some, too, who could not view the situation without jealousy. They had twice been persuaded by (State) government authorities in Illinois and Missouri to give up their arms on some special appeals to their patriotic confidence, had then been left to the malice of their enemies. And now they were asked, in the midst of Indian country, to surrender over five hundred of their best men in a war march of thousands of miles to California, without the hope of return till after the conquest of that country. Could they view such a proposition with favor?" See Tyler, Mormon Battalion, pp. 79-80.
men a year ago in twenty-four hours than one hundred in one week now."\(^1\)

In all fairness, however, it must be reported that this call from the Government did not come completely unsolicited. Jesse C. Little, president of the Eastern States Mission for the Church, had been directed to seek aid from the Government for the Saints in their westward trek by offering the services of the Mormons along the Oregon Trail. The thinking had been that perhaps they could build forts or blockhouses to aid emigrants in their travel to Oregon, and therefore help secure this territory for the United States.\(^2\) Another consideration was that of freighting naval supplies to the Pacific Coast.\(^3\) In either one of these ways both the United States and the Mormons could have been benefited.

President Polk had seemed sympathetic to the Mormon request. Then war broke out with Mexico, and while Little was in Washington conferring with President Polk, an "Army of the West" under General Stephen Kearney was authorized by the government to invade New Mexico and take California.

Mr. Little's friends in Washington informed him in May of 1846 that a plan for Mormon participation in this movement had been discussed by President Polk and his cabinet. This was indeed an unexpected answer to Little's call for government sympathy and assistance, but Mr. Little seems to have felt that it was an acceptable answer to his requests, for he continued his appeal to the President that this would be carried out.

\(^1\)History of Brigham Young, MS Vol. II, pp. 3-4.


\(^3\)Roberts, Mormon Battalion, p. 6.
On June 8th the plan was authorized and the Secretary of War made out the necessary papers.¹

Advantages of the Call

Although this call may have appeared at first to some Mormons as a harsh demand from the Government, it was actually a favor to the Mormons. B. H. Roberts says: "The law authorizing the President to organize an army to make war upon Mexico empowered him only to call for volunteers, fifty thousand of them apportioned among the states. The quota in most of the states was over-subscribed by three times the number asked for, and the United States did not really need the service of the Mormon Battalion of five hundred men in the sense that there was a lack of volunteers. The war was a very popular one."²

Therefore, even though raising an army of five hundred men from the ranks of the Mormon encampment produced difficulties, Brigham Young felt it wise to respond to this call. There were several advantages immediately apparent to Brigham Young and those associated with him. The charge of disloyalty to the American government often leveled against the Saints could be overcome by response to this call. Serving in time of war at great sacrifice would surely be proof of loyalty to the nation.³

A second advantage came in the matter of finances. The Mormons as a group were practically penniless. Here was a chance to earn some much-needed cash for the benefit of the pioneers. The Battalion members were to be paid at the rate of $3.50 each per month for clothing allow-

¹Ibid., pp. 7-11.
This was given to them in advance in the sum of $42.00 for the year's enlistment, or about $21,000 for the entire Battalion. In addition, each soldier would receive his pay, which ranged from $7.00 per month for privates up to $50 for Captains, plus twenty cents a day rations. As Brigham Young instructed, this money was sent back to the Church (from Ft. Leavenworth where their year's clothing allowance was given) by the men and used to benefit the Saints camped in Iowa.  

Brigham Young expressed dissatisfaction with the $5,860 that was sent by the Battalion, stating that he expected an amount equal to $16,000. He therefore sent agents John D. Lee and Howard Egan to Santa Fe. They obtained an additional $4,000, which was gratefully accepted.

In addition to the actual money received by the Battalion, one other advantage was that in a sense the five hundred men were getting what amounted to a free trip. They were getting paid to go to their destination when otherwise they would go without any pay.

A third benefit coming as a result of the Battalion call was that the Saints obtained permission from the Government and the Potawatomi Indians to remain on Indian lands for another season. It had been determined prior to the Battalion call that the many thousands of Mormons could not get to the Great Basin that same year, and would have to camp through the winter on the prairies. Some of the land even eventually came into permanent possession of the Church.

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1Ibid., pp. 95-96.
2Ibid., pp. 96-97.
3Ibid., p. 96.
Other advantages came in the form of the arms and camp equipment issued to the men, which they were to be allowed to keep when discharged in California. Also important was the fact that Brigham Young realized that when they reached the Great Basin it would be preferable to be under the jurisdiction of the United States Government rather than the Mexican.1

Organization of Battalion - Religious and Military

Thus it was that by July 16th Captain James Allen, under order of General Kearney, had enlisted over five hundred men into the Mormon Battalion. They took their first march toward Ft. Leavenworth. Five companies were organized with Mormon captains over each. Levi W. Hancock was a member of Company E and served as company musician.

It is not the purpose of this work to trace the entire activities of the Battalion, but rather to assess the leadership of this body of men, particularly that of Levi W. Hancock, for Hancock was involved in the directing of the religious affairs of the Battalion.

As pointed out earlier, the Battalion was unique. It was composed entirely of members of the Mormon faith. Most of these men were devout and sincere members of the Church, or they would not have been camped on the prairies of Iowa in such a lamentable condition as they were in when the call came. This particular circumstance created a military unit of more than the usual caliber of men in terms of loyalty and obedience. Certainly it was true that they were not particularly qualified in military training and discipline, but their religious qualifications

seemed to equal, if not to exceed, the qualifications necessary to com-
pensate for the lack of formal training. At least their commander seemed to
feel this way, for at the time of discharge he praised them for their
accomplishments and their "arduous Journey", their patriotism to the
government, obedience to orders, and their services were further sought. Corporal Thomas Dunn of Company B recorded in his diary the following:
"The Battalion was discharged from the service, by Lieut. Smith. The
majority of the Battalion were then anxious to make their way to the
Church. But almost hourly solicited to enter the service again. At this
time nearly all the officers of the Battalion were encouraging it all
they possibly could..."  
An additional procedure, apparently unusual in military history,
was that of the privates being allowed to elect their own officers, ex-
cepting the commanding officer, who was of the regular army and of course
non-Mormon. The officers were then to choose the noncommissioned officers,
subject to approval of the commanding officer, as was also in the case of
the privates choosing their officers. The selection of officers was
carried out in typical Church fashion, however, for Brigham Young said:
"If the brethren wished him to nominate men for officers he should select
men of judgment, faith, and experience who would take care of the lives
of the men." The men then voted to have Brigham Young and his council

1Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 282.
2Diary of Thomas Dunn, Corporal Co. B., Typed copy, page 27,
July 16, 1847.
3Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 113.
4Golder, March of Mormon Battalion, p. 123.
nominate the officers for the companies.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 123-124; see also Campbell, "Hist. of Church in California", p. 79.} At any rate the officers were chosen through the men rather than by the army itself.

Definite instructions were given by President Young to the men through their officers concerning their conduct. They were admonished to be true to church standards, loyal to their country and kind to all, even the enemy. The following counsel is quoted:

President Brigham Young instructed the captains to be fathers to their companies and manage their affairs by the power and influence of their Priesthood; then they would have power to preserve their lives and the lives of their companies and escape difficulties. The President told them that he would not be afraid to pledge his right hand that every man would return alive, if they would perform their duties faithfully, without murmuring and go in the name of the Lord be humble and pray every morning and evening in their tents. A private soldier is as honorable as an officer, if he behaves as well. No one is distinguished as being better flesh and blood than another. Honor the calling of every man in his place. All the officers but three have been in the Temple. Let no man be without his undergarment and always wear a coat or vest, keep neat and clean, teach chastity, gentility and civility; swearing must not be admitted, insult no man; have no contentious conversation with the Missourian, Mexican, or any class of people; do not preach, only where people desire to hear, and then by wise men. Impose not your principles on any people, take your Bibles and Books of Mormon; burn cards, if you have any.

...never trespass on the rights of others; when the Father has proved that a man will be his friend under all circumstances, he will give to that man abundantly, and withhold no good thing from him. Should the battalion engage with the enemy and be successful, treat prisoners with the greatest civility, and never take life, if it can be avoided.\footnote{Journal History of Church, MS, July 16, 1846.}

These same instructions were recorded as follows by Daniel Tyler. He quotes Sergeant Hyde as saying:

On Saturday, the 16th of July, 1846, President B. Young, H. C. Kimball, P. P. Pratt, W. Richards, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff
met in private council with the commissioned and non-commissioned officers, on the bank of the Missouri river, and there gave us their last charge and blessing, with the firm promise that, on condition of faithfulness on our part, our lives should be spared, our expedition should result in great good and our names should be held in honorable remembrance to all generations. They instructed the officers to be as fathers to the privates, to remember their prayers, to see that the name of Deity was revered, and that virtue and cleanliness were strictly observed. They also instructed us to treat all men with kindness and never to take that which did not belong to us, even from our worst enemies, not even in time of war if we could possibly prevent it; and in case we should come in contact with our enemies and be successful, we should treat prisoners with kindness and never take life when it could be avoided.¹

It will be observed that these instructions were issued to the officers of the Battalion. Levi W. Hancock was not called as an officer, but as a musician in Company E with the rank of a private. This gave him no official military leadership over the men. He was, however, a general authority of the Church as a member of the First Council of the Seventy. A question arises as to how much authority he was given over the religious affairs of the men. Why did Brigham Young not call him to be an officer that he might be in a position to exert religious control also? Why were religious instructions, as indicated in the above quotations, given to the officers and, to all appearances, not to Levi Hancock who might logically be the rightful spiritual leader by appointment? Dr. Eugene Campbell of the History Department at Brigham Young University has written that "in fact it might here be assumed that the men were committed to the leadership of their officers, religiously as well as militarily, since they were chosen by the Church leaders."²

¹Tyler, Mormon Battalion, pp. 128-129.
²Campbell, "History of Church in California," p. 79.
It appears as somewhat of a paradox that though Hancock was a general authority of the Church he seems to have had no official religious leadership over the Battalion as a whole. It may be concluded that though he did become a recognized spiritual leader it was as much by reason of his zealous and religious spirit as by virtue of his position as a member of the First Council of the Seventy. By present-day policies a man in his position, under similar circumstances, would naturally assume spiritual direction of such a group; furthermore, the members of the group would expect him to do so.

Campbell has further pointed out that:

There is no reliable evidence that he had any official appointment as spiritual leader. On the contrary, he was never mentioned by Brigham Young in his communications with the battalion, and he makes no claim for such office in his own journal. Further evidence may be seen in the fact that Jefferson Hunt conducted most of the meetings, and although he usually called on Hancock to speak, Hunt was in charge. President Young apparently expected the officers to take the lead in spiritual affairs as well as military.¹

Perhaps several observations can be drawn from this situation. First, it might seem that Brigham Young did not feel it necessary to appoint an official religious leader to the Battalion, although this appears inconsistent with usual Mormon procedure. From the time of Joseph Smith's early organization of the Church he appointed leadership in most Church activities. For example, the march of Zion's Camp was well organized, with leadership provided from the top down to the small groups or companies.

Of course, it must be remembered that the Battalion, though

composed of Mormon men, was not an official Mormon organization as such, but rather one of the United States government. It was organized on military lines, and though the officers, excepting the Battalion commander, were Mormons, they acted under the direction of the military. This would not preclude, however, an organization of the men on Church lines for purposes of maintaining the standards and functions of the Church. In fact, as stated, it seems consistent with Church procedure to do so. The question then logically arises as to why Hancock was not given this official charge by Brigham Young.

However, it might seem reasonable that since the officers of the Battalion, being Mormon, already had organizational control of the group, they might easily act in a spiritual and religious leadership capacity as well. In fact, this could be what Brigham Young had in mind. As noted earlier, in giving instructions to the Battalion he told the officers to be as fathers to the privates and further for the captains to be fathers to their companies. He admonished them to watch over the men and see that they tended to prayers, virtue and cleanliness. 1 Campbell says: "It seemed to be taken for granted that the Mormon officers, having been nominated by the leaders of the Church, were expected to lead out in religious affairs, as well as the military."

An additional reason for Levi Hancock's apparent lack of official leadership may lie in the fact that the Council of Seventy in the early days of the Church had not yet evolved into the high position of Church

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1 Journal History of the Church, MS, July 18, 1846.
2 Campbell, "History of Church in California", p. 87.
authority that it has today. That their position has become greater in authority over the Church as a presiding body is an assertion supported by James N. Baumgarten. He has written that in the beginning when the Council was chosen in 1835, the first Seven Presidents merely presided over the First Quorum of the Seventy. But some years later, by the time of Brigham Young, as more quorums of Seventy were organized the original Seven Presidents seem to have become a Presidency over all the Seventy. At the time of the march of the Battalion in 1846, these changes seem to have been taking place. Hancock was recognized as a leader in the Church over the Seventies, but did not seem to have been a leader over the whole Church, as the Seven Presidents of the Seventy are today.

That Levi Hancock presided over the Seventies in the Battalion is definitely learned from the Journal History of the Church. Seventies were a prominent part of the Battalion and "as many of the men of the Battalion were members of the Seventies quorums, Seventies meetings were held occasionally, when circumstances would permit. They were always presided over by Brother Hancock in his capacity as one of the First Presidency of that organization."2

The quotation continued in stating the zealousness of this man and how he deserved credit for much influence for righteousness among the men. However, evidence of any official presiding capacity over the religious affairs of the whole Battalion is not clearly apparent, either

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1 Baumgarten, "The Role and Function of the Seventies in L.D.S. History," pp. 31-33.
2 Journal History of the Church, MS, Feb. 8, 1847; see also Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 266.
in the form of a direct statement from the Church Presidency of that
time or from the records revealing the activities of the Battalion.

Perhaps it seems strange that President Brigham Young would ignore
another General Authority as a leader among such a large body of Church
members, particularly when so many of them were Seventies; but when one
considers that church leadership positions were still developing in terms
of duties and relationships of one toward the other it may be more under-
standable. There are two references, however, that refer to Hancock as
a "chaplain" in the Battalion. These references come closer in indicating
some kind of an official "call" than any yet found. Frank Goldar, in his
_March of the Mormon Battalion_, which is taken from the journal of Henry
Standage, makes a reference to Levi W. Hancock as "Chaplain" and one of
the musicians of the Mormon Battalion.\(^1\) Victoria Jackson, a granddaughter
of Levi through his son Mosiah, has compiled sketches of her father's
history. They have been placed at the close of the typewritten copy of
his own life story. A comment, apparently made by her following this
history gives the following notation about Levi's call. It is written
as a preface to some songs: "The first three songs [that follow in the
diary] pertaining to the sufferings of the Mormon Battalion were composed
by Levi W. Hancock, father of Mosiah Hancock, who was set apart by Pres-
ident Brigham Young as Chaplain. He was the only Church leader of that
Army. He was also violinist and fifer for them."\(^2\)

One other reference suggesting that Levi did receive a call
comes from Mosiah's own diary, which reads: "We got there [Counsel

\(^1\) Goldar, _March of the Mormon Battalion_, p. 117.

\(^2\) Life Story of Mosiah Hancock, p. 106.
Point] just in time for President Young, Kimball, and Richards to come
and choose father to go and spiritually preside over the Mormon Battalion. 1

These are the only references discovered that refer directly to
any official position of Hancock as a religious leader of the Battalion.
The latter reference seems to stand alone as one which even suggests an
official call from Brigham Young. Just how official this calling to
"spiritually preside" over the Battalion was would be very difficult
to determine. This might have been Mosiah's interpretation in retro-
spect as he wrote his history later in life, many years after this in-
stance occurred. He would have been but a boy of twelve years of age
when his father was called to the Battalion. What details he would
know of the call at this age and then remember years later could be
questioned. Just what is meant in the references to him as a chaplain is
not clear. He apparently was not "commissioned" by the army as a chap-
lain because his rank remains a private during the march. This term was
probably attached unofficially by members of the Battalion because of his
spiritual activity. Regarding the religious order of the Battalion and
the appointment of a chaplain, Campbell says:

The records indicate that there was no official religious
organization within the battalion. There was no chaplain appoint-
ed by the army, and the Church had not designated any special per-
son to be responsible for the religious leadership of the Batta-
lion. It seemed to be taken for granted that the Mormon officers,
having been nominated by the leaders of the Church, were expected
to lead out in religious affairs, as well as the military. Brigham
Young addressed his letters to Captain Jefferson Hunt when he
wrote concerning religious affairs, and it appears certain that he
regarded him as the religious leader of the group. 2

1Ibid., p. 33.
2Campbell, "History of Church in California," pp. 87-88.
Henry W. Bigler in his journal referred to Levi's role in the Battalion. In talking of Fathers Pettigrew and Levi W. Hancock he says: "These men had been appointed by President Brigham Young to counsel, advise and act as fathers to the boys of the Battalion."¹ This may have been the type of leadership of which Mosiah was speaking. To "spiritually preside" over the Battalion could conceivably be fulfilled in Levi being a counselor and an adviser to the men.

One thing is clear in all this uncertainty. Hancock was a General Authority and did have a great deal of influence in the Battalion. It is to his credit that, as time went on, the men were more attracted to him as a leader than they were to the officers. It is certain that he did become one of the spiritual leaders of the Mormon Battalion.

The March to California - Levi Hancock's Role as a Leader

The Battalion was mustered into service and began the first miles of its march to Ft. Leavenworth. Levi Hancock recorded his enlistment and first few days of the journey. The following is taken from his journal: "Monday, July 20, 1846. I enlisted in the army of the United States in the fifth company [Co. E], Daniel C. Davis, captain. I was chosen musician, Jesse Earl, drummer, James Pace was 1st Lieutenant, Andrew Lytle, second Lieutenant; these men I messed with. Nothing done but organizing for some time."²


²Levi W. Hancock, Original Journal, MS 16A, July 20, 1846.
Hancock described his part as musician during the first few days' march. Under the date of July 22 he recorded: "We marched out to the tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and traveled four miles. At 7 o'clock p.m. we marched again, and by request of Col. Allen I again played "The Girl I Left Behind Me." We traveled eighteen miles over muddy roads and camped on a small stream beside the bluff." An entry from the Journal History of the Church corresponds with Hancock's. It reads: "The fifth company of the Mormon Battalion started this morning. Col. Allen requested the musician, Levi W. Hancock, to play "The Girl I Left Behind Me." The Battalion traveled twenty-two miles." It is interesting to note that of the five musicians in the Battalion Levi was chosen to play for these first marches. No reason for his choice can be observed. Perhaps it can be assumed that by virtue of his Church position he was better known, or perhaps he was known to be a better musician. One can only speculate.

While at Ft. Leavenworth Colonel Allen, the Battalion Commander, took sick. He ordered the men to proceed on August 12th, intending to overtake them in a few days. Unfortunately he grew worse, and on August 23rd he died. This was a terrible blow to the men of the Battalion, for they had grown to like him a great deal. Hancock expressed in his diary the feelings of many of the men: "The Colonel was very kind to us and

1Thid., July 22.
2Journal History of the Church, MS, July 22, 1846.
3Daniel Tyler's Mormon Battalion lists the officers of the companies and shows two musicians for each company. From the above quote from Levi's journal it may be assumed that one was a drummer and the other played a fife or some other instrument. Perhaps Levi played a violin, on which he had evidently become quite proficient.
made us ride; he administered consolation to us and nothing was too good for his men.\textsuperscript{1}

Colonel Allen's death was unfortunate in that his replacement, Lt. A. J. Smith, did not endear himself to the men as had Col. Allen. Smith was a strict disciplinarian and the men resented what seemed to them unfair treatment by him. By a previous agreement between Col. Allen and Brigham Young, the command should have devolved upon the ranking officer, which would have been Captain Jefferson Hunt of Company A.\textsuperscript{2} But the commander at Ft. Leavenworth, Major Horton, either not knowing of or ignoring the agreement, appointed Lt. Smith as commander of the Battalion.

Upon learning of Smith's appointment, a council of officers met and demanded to know the reason for this action. Among other reasons it was explained that Smith, being of the regular army, could obtain supplies from the Missourians, the old enemies of the Mormons, easier than a Mormon officer might be able to do. After this discussion Captain Hunt submitted the matter to the officers, and all but three voted in favor of accepting Lieutenant Smith as the commander of the Battalion.\textsuperscript{3}

This action, however, upset the men of the Battalion and caused an ill feeling between them and the officers that held forth into the later lives of many of the men.\textsuperscript{4} It may well have been a turning point

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., July 21, 1846.

\textsuperscript{2}Roberts, Comprehensive History, Vol. III, p. 105; see also Tyler, Mormon Battalion, pp. 153-156.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 106.

\textsuperscript{4}Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 114.
in causing the men to lose confidence in their officers and turn to the
religious leadership of Levi Hancock. On a number of occasions when dis-
putes arose among the men, Levi Hancock and Father David Pettigrew were
sought by the men for counsel and spiritual advice. They became the real
spiritual leaders of the Battalion.

The Battalion had not been long on the trail when a minor crisis
arose among the men, apparently in regard to their personal conduct.

This event is described as follows by Levi W. Hancock:

In the night I had a bad dream [in which he thought he saw
trouble for the men]...I was sick to my stomach to see them be-
have so. I woke up. I did not know what to do. I felt so bad
I thought I should die [die]. I called on brother Andrew Lytle
and Thomas Wolsey and James Pace to administer to me. They did
and it appeared to do me good for a time. I called on Father
Pedigroo [Pettigrew] and he administered to me and then proph-
esied [prophesied] that Satan would leave me. I about this
time, saw D. B. Huntington who told me that some of the brethren
had defiled themselves and many witnesses had seen it with their
own eyes. I concluded that I would ponder upon the subject and
see if there couldn't be some measures taken that would prevent
more of such troubles in the camp. Therefore I called on Captain
Hunt and told him we ought to have some meetings. He then ap-
pointed me in charge of the same and then called on Brother Wm.
Hyde and Tyler to assist [assist] me and Father Pettigrew [Petti-
grew] to open the meeting. I there talked to the Battalion as
well as I knew how. I told them they must not swear [swear]
and take the name of the Lord in vain [vain], and told them
that he that had sinned to do it no more. And for a long time I
hoped they would watch over themselves and try to break off from
the habit entirely. They said they would try to do as I had told
them and all held up their hands to observe the things that I had
said.2

This meeting is recorded by several of the men who kept journals
of the Battalion. It must have impressed them somewhat, since all re-
ferred to Brother Hancock, even though some of the other speakers1

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1David Pettigrew was probably the oldest member of the Batta-
lion and had been a member of the High Council in Nauvoo. He seems to
have been a man in whom the men had much confidence, along with Hancock.

2Levi W. Hancock, Original Journal, MS, 16A, August 20, 1846.
names were omitted. An entry in the Journal History of the Church for August 20, which is an excerpt from the journal of William Coray, reads:

It was agreed upon by the council to have a meeting in the afternoon and a lecture by Elders Tyler and Hyde. Accordingly, at the appointed hour the Brethren commenced meeting. Levi W. Hancock, who was the highest ecclesiastical authority in the Battalion at this time, opened the meeting. Elder Tyler spoke followed by Hancock, Hyde, and Capt. Hunt; the latter told his feelings at considerable length and with great animation. He fairly laid the ax at the root of the tree and discomfited vice in the strongest terms, which imparted a good spirit to the battalion and checked insubordination materially.¹

Another entry from the Journal History of the same day records the meeting as follows:

During the afternoon the Battalion was called together and addressed by Capt. Jefferson Hunt, Capt. Daniel Tyler, David Pettigrew, Musician Levi W. Hancock and Sgt. Wm. Hyde, respectively. An excellent spirit prevailed, and all seemed to appreciate the remarks... At 1 p.m., the Battalion was called together, for the first time, and addressed by Elders Daniel Tyler, Levi W. Hancock, Wm. Hyde, and Jefferson Hunt. They stirred up our minds to a remembrance of our duty to God, the mission we were on, the sacrifice we had made to perform this mission, and the goodness of God manifested toward us. It was a first rate meeting. Two persons were baptized for the recovery of their health and one for the remission of sins.²

Daniel Tyler's version reads:

During the afternoon the Battalion was called together and addressed by Captain Hunt. Corporal Daniel Tyler, Musician Levi W. Hancock and Sargeant Wm. Hyde respectively. An excellent spirit prevailed, and all seemed to appreciate the remarks.³

Corporal Thomas Dunn of Company B records in his private journal of this day:

At 5 o'clock p.m., the Battalion was called together for the purpose of receiving some instructions from Levi Hancock

¹Journal History of the Church, MS, August 20, 1846.
²Ibid.
³Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 1140.
and others which ended with a good result. Three were baptized. Two for recovery of health and one for remission of sins. We felt that all was going right.¹

Henry Standage also records this meeting of August 20th in his journal. Hancock, Tyler and Pettigrew are listed as the speakers. He quotes Hancock as saying that the sick would be healed if they would put away those things displeasing to the Lord.²

It is evident from the foregoing quotes that Hancock was considered a fairly prominent leader, even at this early point in the march. That he sincerely felt himself responsible and bound to this leadership through divine approval is shown by the following journal entry a few days after the August 20th meeting:

Having an opportunity [opportunity] I now finish recording the operation of the spirit upon me on the 21st day at Hurricane Hill. I thought the Lord spoke to me that my sins were all forgiven and what was done at the meeting [August 20] was according to his spirit which overjoyed me so that I lay sometime in the spirit praising my God who is so good and kind as to manifest Himself to me in such a manner.³

Another incident revealing Levi Hancock's prominent role in the Battalion occurred during the month of September. Conditions in the Battalion had reached a critical point due to shortage of food for the men and forage for the animals. Colonel Smith seemed little disposed to give attention to this problem. Because of this "the commissioned officers, with David Pettigrew, known as Father Pettigrew, and Levi W. Hancock, our spiritual advisers, met in counsel with Howard Egan, John D.

¹Diary of Thomas Dunn, Corporal, Company B, typed copy, p. 1, August 20, 1846.
²Colter, March of Mormon Battalion, p. 118.
³Levi W. Hancock, Original Journal, MS, August 26, 1846.
Lee, James Pace and others, when our condition was freely discussed, but nothing was, or perhaps could be done, to ameliorate it.¹

Further evidence of Levi Hancock's prominent role took place on September 15 and October 3rd. A council of officers had been called on the latter date to consider a temporary division of the Battalion because of the order of General Kearney that the Battalion must reach Santa Fe by the tenth or be discharged. He suggested that the most able-bodied men move on quickly ahead, leaving the sick with weak teams to follow as best they could. The proposition was assented to, being opposed only by "Lieutenant James Pace, Andrew Lytle, Samuel Gulley and, we think, Lieutenant W. W. Willis, with invited guests, Levi W. Hancock, David Pettigrew, Sargeant Wm. Hyde and others."² They opposed the move on the grounds that Colonel Allen had promised that the Battalion should not be divided. Adjutant Dykes had favored the division, saying that Brigham Young did not know their circumstances.

A similar problem had arisen on September 15th when the commanding officer insisted that the families not specifically enrolled as part of the Battalion should be detached and sent under guard of ten men up the Arkansas River to Pueblo.³ There were strong protests against this division of the Battalion. It was held as a violation of the "promise" of Colonel Allen that the Battalion would not be divided, and Brigham Young had counseled the officers not to allow it on any reason or

¹Journal History of the Church, MS, Sept. 12, 1846; See also Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 160.
²Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 163.
account. Levi Hancock expressed his views about the matter as recorded in his journal:

Marched 10 miles and camped on the west side. Here we was [sic] detained for some cause or other. Here some families were sent up the river, to Bents fort [on way to Pueblo]. I told the officers that I wanted it distinctly understood that it did not agree with my feelings for it was told to us that we must hold together not to divide, but it must be done they said and we must take the Simerone [Cimarron] route.2

Several observations can be made about Levi Hancock from these two incidents. They indicate the unofficial position of prominence held by him. For a musician to be called to a council of officers was not general army procedure. It was undoubtedly not this position that prompted the officers to invite him, but rather his standing as a spiritual leader of the men. It also shows the unwavering nature of this man in following to the letter the instructions of the Church officials. This type of literal faith and devotion was typical of his life. These events also indicate more of the source of trouble that existed between the officers and the two spiritual advisers, Hancock and Pettigrew. The latter were "consistently on the side which counseled faith, prayers, and absolute dependence upon the divine inspiration of their leaders in the Church."3

The first division of the Battalion arrived at Santa Fe on October ninth. The second division, consisting of the slower travelers, arrived on the twelfth. While at Santa Fe and shortly after leaving

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1Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 157.
2Levi W. Hancock, Original Journal, MS, September 15, 1846.
3Campbell, "History of Church in California," p. 93.
there for the continued westward march, two more divisions of the Battalion occurred. Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, who had been appointed by General Kearney to command the remainder of the march, and Colonel Doniphan, commandant of Santa Fe, "proffered to send all the sick, together with the remaining women and children belonging to the Battalion, to Pueblo to winter, with an escort, and with the privilege in the Spring of intersecting the main body of the Church and going westward with them at Government expense." Therefore eighty-six men, with all the women and children except five of the officers' wives, marched to Pueblo under the command of James Brown. On November the tenth, fifty-five more men were felt to be physically unable to continue the march. They were sent back to Pueblo under command of Lt. W. W. Willis.

What Levi Hancock's feelings were concerning these two divisions can only be guessed. Perhaps he resisted again as before, or perhaps he saw the wisdom of the moves. These divisions certainly worked out for the best good of the Battalion, as subsequent events proved. Certainly the women, children, the sick, and the Battalion as a whole would have had an even more difficult time than they did if the earlier advice of Hancock and Pettigrew against division had been followed.

Still another event further indicates the religious leadership and spiritual nature of Hancock, as well as Pettigrew. On the twentieth of November, while the Battalion was just north of El Paso, the guides

1Roberts, Comprehensive History of Church, Vol. III, p. 110.
2Ibid., p. 111.
3Ibid., p. 112. The Battalion had been reduced to about three hundred fifty men.
returned with the report of no water ahead, probably until they reached
the Gila River, one hundred miles further on. The commander and his
staff decided to follow the road in a southwesterly direction. This
would take the Battalion into Mexico instead of California as they had
been promised. The entire command was thrown into gloom by this decision.
Fear of not being able to join their families in California spread among
the men. Concerning this crisis Daniel Tyler recorded:

In this critical moment, Brother David Pettigrew, better
known as 'Father Pettigrew,' owing to his silver locks and father-
ly counsels, and Brother Levi W. Hancock, went from tent to tent,
and in a low tone of voice counseled the men to pray to the Lord
to change the colonel's mind. Then they invited a few to accom-
pany them to a secret place where they could offer up their pet-
itions and not be seen by those in camp. That night over three
hundred fervent prayers ascended to the throne of grace for that
one favor. ***

On the morning of the 21st, the command resumed its journey,
marching in a southern direction for about two miles, when it
was found that the road began to bear southeast instead of south-
west, as stated by the guides. The colonel looked in the direc-
tion of the road, then to the southwest, saying: 'I don't want to
get under General Wool, and lose my trip to California.' He
arose in his saddle and ordered a halt. He then said with firm-
ness: 'This is not my course. I was ordered to California, and,'
he added with an oath, 'I will go there or die in the attempt!' Then turning to the bugler, he said, 'Blow the right.'

At this juncture 'Father Pettigrew' involuntarily exclaimed,
'God bless the colonel!' The colonel's head turned and his keen,
penetrating eyes glanced around to discern whence the voice came,
and then his grave, stern face, for once, softened and showed
signs of satisfaction.1

This incident probably increased the respect of the men for
Levi W. Hancock and David Pettigrew. Their faith in Hancock was to man-
ifest itself again in California.

1Tyler, Mormon Battalion, pp. 206-207.
Hancock as a Poet

Levi W. Hancock had other talents besides faith and leadership. He composed a number of poems which vividly described conditions and trials of the men on the march. Ivan J. Barrett refers to him as "the poet of the battalion." One of Kate B. Carter’s books on pioneer days says of Hancock’s poetic ability: "There were some excellent poets in the ranks, and these poems give vivid word pictures of the march of the Mormon Battalion, and when recited in their gatherings would recall past experiences. 'Death and the Wolves' by Levi W. Hancock, a musician in Company E. 'The Bull Fight on the San Pedro' by Levi Hancock, 'In These Hard Times' by Asariah Smith, Company B."2

One of the most descriptive accounts of the bad conditions endured by the Battalion is a song composed by Levi Hancock entitled "The Desert Route."3 Immediately prior to reaching Santa Fe and during the march following Santa Fe the men covered territory at times devoid of water and forage. It was a demanding struggle to provide for their needs and to maintain their morale. On one occasion Hancock records in his journal an entry that reveals the destitute conditions that existed.

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1Ivan J. Barrett, "The Longest Infantry March in History" in The Instructor, (Salt Lake City: April, 1963), p. 118.


3A volume of Hancock’s poems in his own handwriting is located at the Library of the Church Historian in Salt Lake City. Several histories of the Mormon Battalion contain copies of some of his poems. Among them are H. H. Bancroft’s History of Utah; Daniel Tyler’s A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion; Paul Bailey’s For This My Glory; Captain Jefferson Hunt of the Mormon Battalion, by Pauline Udall Smith; and Heartthrobs of the West, Kate B. Carter as compiler.
He wrote that there was "nothing but mud to drink which was half buffalo urine." 1

It was natural, then, that in the Battalion there was some bickering and petty strife. Paul Bailey says: "There were complaints, bitter accusations muttered against Cooke, the officers, Brigham Young and the apostles. But the great majority gallantly refused to allow hardships to embitter their hearts or destroy their cheerfulness." 2 He adds that at night flies, mouth organs and fiddles helped bolster flagging spirits. Through the day they chanted their hymns or sang Hancock's song, "The Desert Route":

While here, beneath a sultry sky,
Our famished mules and cattle die;
Scarce aught but skin and bones remain
To feed poor soldiers on the plain.

Chorus:
How hard, to starve and wear us out,
Upon this sandy, desert route.

We sometimes now for lack of bread,
Are less than quarter rations fed,
And soon expect, for all of meat,
Naught less than broke-down mules, to eat.

Now, half-starved oxen, over-drilled,
Too weak to draw, for beef are killed;
And gnawing hunger prompting men
To eat small entrails and the skin.

Our hardships reach their rough extremes,
When valiant men are roped with teams,
Hour after hour, and day by day,
To wear our strength and lives away.

The teams can hardly drag their loads
Along the hilly, sandy roads,

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1 Levi W. Hancock, Original Journal, MS., Sept. 19, 1846.

2 Paul Bailey, For This My Glory, (Los Angeles: Lyman House Publisher, 1940) p. 238.
While travelling near the Rio Grande,
O'er hills and dales of heated sand.

We see some twenty men, or more,
With empty stomachs, and foot-sore,
Bound to one wagon, plodding on
Thro' sand, beneath a burning sun...

Another burden the men had to bear was in the form of Dr. George Sanderson, physician and surgeon, assigned to the Battalion at Fort Leavenworth. This officer became the center of much dissension in the Battalion. He was thoroughly disliked by the men. To them he was vulgar and profane. These characteristics, however, were less distasteful to the men than his refusal to accept the Mormon belief in faith healing. When Dr. Sanderson discovered that the men were not appearing at sick call, he and Lieutenant Smith used "horrid oaths" and threatened their lives. Thereafter the sick were forced to march to sick call to the tune of "Jim Along Joe". At the doctor's quarters they were given calomel and arsenic from an old iron spoon for their fevers, along with a dose of his cursing.2

This situation was compounded when Smith was approached by Sergeant N. V. Jones with an appeal to get respect for their religious beliefs in regard to medicine. The Colonel said he didn't know anything about their religion and asked Adjutant Dykes if refusing medicine was a part of their beliefs. Dykes replied that "there were no such religious scruples, and that the Church authorities themselves took such medicine."3

1 For complete song see Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 182-3; see also Bancroft, History of Utah, p. 244.

2 Tyler, Mormon Battalion, pp. 14:4-14:7.

3 Ibid., p. 14:5.
While there were elements of truth in Dykes' reply the men had been cautioned by Brigham Young against taking the surgeon's medicine.¹

Levi Hancock exerted his efforts in the matter of this medicine. In a letter to President Brigham Young after their arrival in California, Hancock said that the few deaths in the Battalion occurred because of Dr. Sanderson's "poison" calomel. He blamed Adjutant Dykes for not standing up for the religious beliefs of the men. He said he went about comforting the men and related his dream about this medicine to them a hundred times.²

Dykes' actions caused further loss of confidence of the men in their officers and made Sanderson more determined to administer his medicine to them. That he was not actually concerned about the welfare of his men, however, is evidenced by the fact that when the able-bodied men were asked to move ahead to Santa Fe and leave the sick behind, Dr. Sanderson made haste to go with the forward group, leaving his sick to follow as best they could.³

Two verses in Hancock's "The Desert Route" tell the feelings of the men in regard to Dr. Sanderson. Paul Bailey says that "in a subdued voice—when officers were not too near"⁴ they sang:

¹Ibid., p. 146.

²Journal History of Church, MS, May 12, 1847; see also Golder, March of the Mormon Battalion, p. 152, which contains a letter from Brigham Young, entreating the men to leave calomel alone and live by faith. It also said: "Levi had a dream in accordance with this day's history."

³Golder, March of Mormon Battalion, p. 163.

⁴Bailey, For This My Glory, p. 239.
A Doctor which the Government
Has furnished, proves a punishment!
At his rude call of "Jim Along Joe;
The sick and halt to him must go.

Both night and morn, this call is heard;
Our indignation then is stirred,
And we sincerely wish in hell,
His arsenic and calomel...

On December 9th the Battalion had reached the San Pedro River
not far from El Paso. Here on the eleventh occurred the only fighting
the Battalion engaged in during its march—a battle with a herd of wild
bulls. The country seemed to abound in herds of wild cattle, the bulls
of which were bold and ferocious. The line of approaching wagons seemed
to attract the curiosity of some, and as if by resentment at their pres-
ence they attacked the column. Two mules were gored to death and one
of the men was seriously injured, but no lives were lost. Of this event
Corporal Thomas Dunn records the following description in his diary of
December 11th:

There was seven beef cattle killed. Also some serious acci-
dents happened. Four by wounded cattle. First Albert Smith was
ran over by one but did not injure him seriously. Second and third
two mules killed by the same means. They were tossed and their
entrails torn out by these lion like beasts. A man of Co. D Amos
Cox was badly gored by one in the thigh. The bull struck him with
his horn, tossed him some distance, tore a gash 4" long and 3"
deep. The surgeon closed it up. Also Mr. Stoneman had his hand
injured by the discharge of his rifle while he was in the act of
preparing to shoot. This is a day that will long be remembered by
some and perhaps most of the Battalion.²

Levi Hancock composed a poem which is descriptive of this event.
The following verses are quoted from "The Bullfight on the San Pedro."

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¹For detailed accounts see Tyler, Mormon Battalion, pp. 218-221,
²Diary of Thomas Dunn, Corporal Co., B, Typed copy, page 15,
Friday, December 11, 1846.
Under command of Colonel Cooke,
When passing down San Pedro's brook,
Where cane-grass, growing rank and high,
Was waving as the breeze pass'd by:

There, as we gain'd ascending ground,
Out from the grass, with fearful bound,
A wild, ferocious bull appear'd,
And challeng'd fight, with horns uprear'd.

"Stop, stop!" said one, "just see that brute!"
"Hold!" was responded, "let me shoot."
He flashed, but failed to fire the gun—
Both stood their ground, and would not run...

The bulls with madden'd fury raged—
The men a skillful warfare waged;
Tho' some, from danger, had to flee
And hide or clamber up a tree.

The bulls rushed on like unicorns,
And gored the mules with piercing horns,
As if the battle ground to gain,
When men and mules should all be slain.

With brutal strength and iron will,
Poised on his horns with master skill,
A bull, one mule o'er mule did throw,
Then made the latter's entrails flow.

O. Cox, from one bull's horns was thrown
Ten feet in air; when he came down,
A gaping flesh-wound met his eye—
The vicious beast had gored his thigh.

Whatever cause, we did not know,
But something prompted them to go;
When all at once in frantic fright,
The bulls ran bellowing out of sight.

And when the fearful fight was o'er,
And sound of muskets heard no more,
At least a score of bulls were found,
And two mules dead upon the ground.¹

After the "Battle of the wild bulls" the Battalion marched to
the northwest and upon reaching Tucson it was taken without a battle.

¹For all verses see Tyler, Mormon Battalion, pp. 221-223.
Then, following three days of hard marching, they reached the Gila River, which was followed to the Colorado.\(^1\) California was entered on the tenth and eleventh of January, 1847, as they ferried across this river during these two days.\(^2\) They saw their first house in California when they reached Warner Ranch on the twenty-first. On the twenty-ninth of January the Battalion sighted the long-talked of San Diego, which ended their march to the Pacific.\(^3\)


\(^2\)Tyler, *Mormon Battalion*, p. 240.

\(^3\)Ibid., 249, 251.
CHAPTER V

THE BATTALION IN CALIFORNIA AND THE
RETURN TO SALT LAKE CITY

Religious Activities and the Role of Levi Hancock

After their arrival at San Diego the Battalion engaged in various garrison duties. On February first it was sent to San Luis Rey, where the men began to drill and get a taste of the discipline of military garrison life. During this time the officers appeared to have become enthusiastic about military life. According to Bailey: "For a month it was drill, drill, drill. Even Mormon officers, chosen by the Battalion, seemed to have become obsessed with the urge to whip the nondescript army into something resembling crack infantry. The officers were either working for promotion or something to eat."\(^1\)

The fact that the officers had become quite "converted" to military life had a bearing on Levi Hancock's role. As the "religious leader" he opposed most of the moves of the officers, thus bringing himself into further conflict with them.

While the Battalion was in garrison duty there was an increase in religious services, and one official religious organization took place. Religious leadership, however, continued to be diversified. Meetings were apparently held regularly each Sunday, often with Levi Hancock as presiding officer, and frequently as a speaker and counselor. The meetings

\(^1\)Bailey, For This My Glory, p. 25h.
that were held and the sermons delivered were mostly concerned with practical problems of the moment rather than being spiritual or doctrinal in nature.

The first meeting for the whole Battalion in California was held at San Luis Rey on February 11, 1847. Captain Hunt called the meeting. A week later, however, on February 21, Levi Hancock presided and he requested Daniel Tyler to do the preaching. The latter spoke against swearing and other vices.\(^1\) A meeting on March 30th is mentioned by Henry Standage and he lists Hancock as making a few remarks. This meeting apparently was not religious but was held to vindicate Captain Hunt in A. J. Smith's taking over the Battalion and showing that prejudice against Hunt was ill-founded.\(^2\)

Records of other religious meetings show that Hancock was usually involved, either as a preacher or an instigator of them. Henry Standage records a meeting on April 22 called by Captain Hunt in which "Elders Pettigrew and Hancock preached on the necessity of keeping ourselves from being polluted and remember our covenants."\(^3\)

Another meeting of June 20 was held by Father Pettigrew and Levi Hancock in the evening. This being Sunday, meeting was held in the Battalion Camps as usual. Excellent remarks were made by Father David Pettigrew, Levi W. Hancock, Lt. Holman and others. One of the principal topics was the return of the Mormon Battalion Brethren.\(^4\)


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 216.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 218.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 228; Journal History, July 20, 1847; Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 293.
Although actual records of Sunday services are not plentiful, Daniel Tyler says that: "Religious services were held every Sunday by the detachment, which were generally well attended by strangers, and Lt. Wm. Hyde, and others, delivered a number of excellent discourses and lectures, which gave general satisfaction to all parties."\(^1\)

Tyler further records: "While we were in garrison, we made it a rule, when possible, to hold religious services on Sunday, which were frequently presided over by Captain Hunt, but sometimes by Father Pettigrew or Levi W. Hancock."\(^2\)

It may be fairly well concluded that meetings were held quite regularly, but by several different "authorities." Some were called by Captain Hunt, others by Pettigrew and Hancock. This is again evidence of a lack of a single official religious leadership. No real religious organization appears to have existed that included the whole Battalion. This situation probably was not the fault of Levi Hancock. Without an official call to preside over the Battalion he could not function in any formal capacity, but as a General Authority of the Church he made every effort to organize the men and direct them in such a manner as to preserve their faith in the Church and encourage them to maintain church standards. Tyler says that in the detachment a "society was organized, entitled the 'Young Men's Club,' for the purpose of lecturing, reciting, declaiming, debating, etc., a kind of 'Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association.'"\(^3\)

\(^1\)Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 264.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 266.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 284.
The only official organization formed was that of a "mass quorum of Seventies" in which Levi Hancock must have played an important part. Tyler writes of this: "As many of the men of the Battalion were members of the Seventies' quorums, Seventies meetings were held occasionally, when circumstances would permit. These were always presided over by Brother Hancock in his capacity as one of the First Presidency of that organization. Brother Hancock was very zealous, and did his best to influence the men to live as their religion taught under every circumstance."

Both Tyler and Standage, in recording the actual organization of this mass quorum of Seventies on April 18, indicate that Stephen St. John was elected President of the Quorum. Why Levi did not act as president is not apparent, although it may have been because he was one of the presidents over all the Seventies quorums of the Church. At any rate, as Tyler recorded, "Hancock always presided over the meetings.

Conflicts Between Hancock and the Officers.

As already noted, there had developed a certain amount of strife and conflict between the officers of the Battalion and Levi Hancock and other spiritual leaders. The officers grew more and more authoritarian and were prone to be strict with the men. This the men felt to be in contrast with the "brotherly love" of the Gospel. Standage recorded that the officers generally were "very strict and seemed to bear down upon the Battalion in particular." The fact that many of the privates were "higher" in the

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1Ibid., p. 266.
2Ibid., p. 277; Golder, March of Mormon Battalion, p. 218.
3Golder, March of Mormon Battalion, p. 228.
priesthood of the Church than some of the officers, added fuel to the fire. This might have been a particularly difficult point with Levi Hancock, who was the highest authority in the Battalion, as far as the priesthood of the Church was concerned.

Of the officers' apparent desire to "manage" the men, Corporal Dunn records in his diary of a difference he had with his Company Commander, Captain Hunter, regarding guard duty. After being "taken" by the guard for not appearing at the appointed hour, of which he said he had not been informed, he wrote:

I met the Capt., but he said not a word. Such conduct hurt my feelings very much, because it was taking advantage of me. It manifested to me that he wished to show his authority, when at the same time it was injury to himself. There has been many such things happened in the character of our officers, which is degrading to their profession and to the Council of the Twelve, for to them we looked for better things. I have not penned anything against them before, because I have hoped and looked for better conduct and example, but have looked in vain.¹

Corporal Dunn also told of the intoxication of several of the officers, which was repugnant to the men.² These incidents and others alienated the men from the officers to a certain extent, and they therefore further sought the counsel and advice of the spiritual leaders, Hancock and Pettigrew.

It seems that these events caused great concern to Levi Hancock, and he made special efforts to preach to the men, and advised them to be united in the gospel and to repent of their sins. This was taken as officious action by the officers and they resented his efforts. In regard

¹Diary of Thomas Dunn, p. 25, May 16.
²Ibid., May 12.
to Levi Hancock's activities, Tyler gives the following:

Brother Hancock was very zealous and did his best to influence the men to live as their religion taught under every circumstance. He was very deserving of much credit for the zeal and diligence he manifested in his missionary work among his brethren, but it was very apparent that some of the officers regarded his actions as officious, and entertained a feeling of jealousy towards him on that account. He, however, denied the imputation that he was prompted by any other than the best and purest of motives, and his influence among them, notwithstanding the prejudice that existed toward him among those few officers.¹

Being the highest Church authority in the Battalion, Levi Hancock appears to have been right in the center of the conflict between officers and men. Also adding to the division of feelings seems to have been Levi's personality conflicts with the officers. Though Levi thought himself sincere in directing many of the affairs of the Battalion, the officers felt that he interfered and they often resented his efforts. This also had the adverse effect of turning the men against the officers, although Hancock probably did not intend to do that.

There is some evidence that Levi wasn't always correct, either. Henry Standage wrote: "Lieutenant Holman, while in conversation with him, said that Levi Hancock's course with the brethren would have amounted to insurrection had he been left to pursue the same and had not been checked."²

Exactly what particular course of Hancock's was referred to here or how it was checked is not given, but it undoubtedly was connected with something contrary to the will of the officers.

At any rate Hancock had the allegiance of many of the men, as is evidenced by the following report from William Coray:

¹Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 266.
²Golder, March of Mormon Battalion, p. 216.
This evening Levi Hancock held a meeting at Lt. Dykes' quarters in which he stated that he hated to be under the necessity of telling the brethren his rights. Said he, 'The spirit of God should do it. Men have tried to take away my rights (meaning the captains) but I won't give them up to any man.' He said that a number of the battalion brethren had met together and washed each other's feet, and anointed each other with oil, and that the spirit of the Lord had testified to them that it was right.

In regards to preaching, 'Brother Tyler is the man to preach to this battalion. I know it for it was revealed to me.' After casting many insinuating remarks about the captains taking the lead when it was not their place, etc., he concluded by calling for an expression of the congregation whether Brother Tyler should preach next Sunday or not... Wm. Hyde arose, stating that he had but little to say, but what he should say would be at the risk of all hazard. This was that Levi Hancock was his file leader and that he would obey his counsel, let the circumstances be what they may...

In the meantime I sat still and listened to all that was said, but said naught myself. I found that Brother Levi and the captain who was present considered themselves insulted by having their appointment taken up before their time.1

Coray continued to say that he didn't know who was right, but that both were wrong. He believed Hancock had stirred up the enmity of the men against the officers and the officers had often been tyrannical and poor examples to the men.2

This division of loyalty and sentiment became strong when time for discharge approached and the men were asked to re-enlist for another term. Colonel Stevenson, who had succeeded Colonel Cooke when he returned east with General Kearney, came from San Diego to Los Angeles on June 28th, to try to get the Battalion to re-enlist for six months. He used an odd mixture of compliments and threats to try to persuade them to sign up again. After hearing his speech the men formed committees to discuss the

1William Coray Journal, recorded in Journal History of the Mormon Battalion, MS, Feb. 15, 1847.
2Ibid., Feb. 15, 1847.
problem. Several officers, including Captains Hunt, Hunter, and Davis, and Lieutenants Canfield and Dykes were strongly in favor of re-enlistment and so stated in speeches before the men. Then Father Pettigrew made a few remarks, stating that he thought it "our duty to return and look after our outcast families; others could do as they thought best, but he believed we had done all we set out to do, and that our offering was accepted and our return would be sanctioned by the Church leaders."

No speech is recorded by Levi Hancock on this occasion, but, as will be noted, it can be quite accurately assumed that his feelings were against re-enlistment. Of another meeting on this problem held in a tent during the afternoon of the same day, Henry Standage gives the following information:

This certainly is a very important crises in the history of the travels of this Battalion of Latter-day Saints, everyone left to be led or walk by faith and the light of the spirit. None privileged to step forth and counsel us and our officers who were given to us for fathers during our service, all seem to have run into many vices, save some. About 12 o'clock we met in the tent. Some few spoke, when it was agreed to appoint a committee to draft an article of writing stating the terms on which men would enlist. Cap. Hunter, Cap. Davis and Father Pettigrew were chosen for that committee. As soon as the writing was completed we were again called together and the articles of agreement read. When several short speeches were made, some believing our mission ended on the 16th of the month and other the reverse. Among the speakers was Sargeant Hyde of Co. B, who spoke to the point of returning...he believed that God was satisfied. Sargeant Tyler made some good remarks on the subject. Father Pettigrew seemed to feel warm on the subject...His remarks were truly applicable. Sargeant Major Ferguson, Caps. Hunt, Hunter and others spoke in favor of re-enlisting. Captain Hunter said it had been hinted that there was a prophet somewhere in the camp, he believed among the privates, if so he wished he would come forth and give us the word of the Lord on the subject...Brother Levi Hancock spoke from the door of the tent, said that he had never influenced the men against the officers, either publicly or privately [some remarks had been made by Cap. Hunter believing that someone had

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1Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 295.
been trying to set the men at variance with the officers. Lieut. Lytle also spoke, denying ever using an influence against the officers. Meeting dispersed, 15 or 16 names being obtained for re-enlisting, news taken to the Col. stating the terms and which was rejected.¹

This meeting reveals two points. First, it showed that most of the men accepted the counsel of Hancock and Pettigrew above that of the senior officers. Their wanting to be discharged probably influenced this. Secondly, it indicated that the officers felt that Hancock and Pettigrew had influenced the men against them.²

There is some indication, as previously mentioned,³ that though Hancock's intentions were sincere, his criticism of the officers did alienate the men. It appears, however, that he was sincerely trying to lead the men aright. The men themselves were faced with the decision of following officers who were not entirely living Church standards, or listening to Hancock and Pettigrew who seemed to have the welfare of both the men and the Church in mind.

Hancock seemed to influence the men in a number of ways, one of which resulted from his practice of holding meetings with the men in select groups, in which the ceremony of washing each other's feet was administered. His own journal records one held on February 12, and Azariah Smith reported such a meeting held on February 18, 1847.

On May 12, 1847, Levi Hancock wrote a long letter to Brigham Young, giving a report of his feelings on the condition of the Battalion. Extracts

¹Golder, *March of Mormon Battalion*, p. 232, also *Journal History*, June 29, 1847.
²Campbell, "History of Church in California," p. 108.
are as follows:

There has been some wickedness among some, but I called them together and talked as well as I could to them and warned them against swearing and cursing each other and fighting. Before I commenced this, I asked the Lord to direct me, and I called a meeting and asked if any man had anything against me, and if he had to tell me so that I might repent. And all hands said that I was clear and had set a good example. I called on a man to come and wash my feet. He said that he would. I then washed his and he mine, and I said, 'I forgive all men according to the revelations.' And told them why I had done it, and how Jesus said, 'If I have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.' All hands then went to washing feet. I told them that they must stop swearing as they had done, and swearing has now become unpopular in this camp. But about this time a jealousy arose among us; some of the officers said that there was a secret conspiracy in the camp. I then called on all the brethren to bear testimony that I had taught nothing but against wickedness, and that I had a perfect right to do it wherever I was in any part of the earth. I have nothing against them, anyhow, but there are many things that look strange to me and that I do not 'comprehendo' as the Spaniards say. Brother Jones, Hulet and others can tell better than I can write. One thing is: some officers putting out their hands to stop the wages of others, as has been the case in this battalion, and then be so full of religion that they imagine they have never sinned in all their lives.¹

It is clearly evident that there were strong feelings in Hancock's mind regarding the unfair conduct of the officers toward the men. It must be assumed that to some degree, at least, there was truth in what Hancock said, because so many of the men followed his advice and met with him in meetings and "washings" such as that just mentioned.

At any rate, when time for discharge came and the men could choose their own leaders, the results of Hancock's activities were apparent, for the men chose to follow Hancock. Just prior to discharge Standage wrote:

Our officers are becoming more and more like men, giving us as many privileges as they can conveniently. They have not been more than half as strict for a few days past. In fact they seem to realize that their power as military commanders will soon be gone,

¹Journal History, May 12, 1847.
and that their influence will be gone too. Inasmuch as they know
that there are men in this battalion who stand as high and much
higher in the Priesthood, therefore it seems as though they wished
to restore the confidence in some measure which they well know
that they departed during the last twelve months. Brothers A.
Lytle and J. Pace are appointed to lead back the company to the
Church, being the only two who have had respect unto the Priest-
hood of the Son of God, and acted as fathers to the brethren who
were placed under them for twelve months.¹

Tyler records that Lytle and Pace "were jointly elected by acclam-
ation, as captains of hundreds, to lead back those who intended to return
to their families that year."² But he doesn't say who nominated them.

It may well have been Levi Hancock, for on July 20, Standage records that
Hancock nominated the "captains of 50's and 10's" and that "Lytle and Pace
were elected by the Brethren and an organization effected according to
the pattern left us for traveling purposes, also military, by our Prophet
Joseph."³ Again Smith records that on July 21st the pioneers of Elisha
Averett's ten left the encampment of San Pedro, near Los Angeles, for
San Francisco ranch. Brother Averett had been appointed a pioneer by
President Brigham Young [this must have been before the call of the Battal-
ion] and was now reappointed by Hancock.⁴ This is further evidence that
Hancock probably nominated most of them.

Independence Day, 1847, was celebrated by the troops at Pueblo de
Los Angeles. Levi Hancock was still in his role as musician of the Battal-
ion. Both Tyler and Standage recorded his contribution to this day's

¹Journal History, June 27, 1847.
²Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 293.
³Golder, March of Mormon Battalion, p. 237.
⁴Journal History, July 21, (recorded October 16, 1847).
festivities. After a short patriotic address by Colonel Stevenson the band played "Yankee Doodle," and a song was sung by Levi Hancock, poet-composer of the Mormon Battalion.¹

The day of discharge for which they had waited so long came on July 16, 1847. The following description is given in the Journal History:

At 3 o'clock P. M. the five companies of the battalion were formed according to the letter of their company, with A in front and E in the rear, leaving a few feet of space in between. The Noterrious [notorious] Lieutenant A. J. Smith then march down between the lines, then in a low tone of voice said, "You are discharged." That is all there was of ceremony of mustering out of the service this veteran corps of living martyrs to the cause of their country and their religion. None of the men regretted the Lieutenant's brevity; in fact, it rather pleased them.²

Henry Standage further added in his journal that after discharge by Smith:

Capt. Davis march Co. E, after being mustered out, into Pueblo, under arms and gave the men as much wine, etc., as they could wish. He then delivered us into the hands of Lt. Pace, First Lieutenant, to march us back to quarters, there to be discharged. Some remarks by Cap. Davis, Lieut. Pace, Lytle, Levi Hancock, and Father Pettigrew when 3 cheers were given, and many left with the animals they had purchased for a camping ground 3 miles up the San Pedro River.³

The Return To Salt Lake Valley

Hancock played a prominent role in leadership when the Battalion was discharged from service. Most of the men were ready to follow him. Only eighty-one men re-enlisted, including some officers. Twelve men had been chosen by General Kearney to escort him on his trip east and had

¹Golder, March of Mormon Battalion, p. 234; Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 297; Bailey, For This My Glory, p. 266.

²Journal History, July 16, 1847.

³Golder, loc. cit., p. 236.
departed May 13th. This left about 250 men who were planning to join
the main body of the Church in the Salt Lake Valley. In writing of this
group William Coray recorded:

Meanwhile those who believed in the counsel of Brother Levi W.
Hancock made preparations and started with him to meet the Church
by way of Walker's Pass. Nearly 40 or 50 in company with Capt.
Hunt also marched for the Bay of San Francisco, expecting to hear
from the Church in that place ... 1

It is noted that the majority of the men remained faithful to the
leadership of Levi Hancock as they had previously done, and the officers
drew only smaller factions with them. This, then, attests to the lack of
leadership among the officers, the role of Levi Hancock as a Church leader,
and the ultimate devotion of the men to the Priesthood of their Church.

Of their initial organization for returning, as already noted,
Hancock was directing. He nominated Lytle and Pace as captains of hundreds
and selected the Captains of fifties and tens. One of the company of tens
was sent ahead to act as pioneers. Their leader, Elisha Averett, who had
been previously appointed by Brigham Young, was now re-appointed by Levi
Hancock.2

The route this main body of the Battalion followed took them up
through the San Fernando Valley and the San Joaquin Valley to the King
River where they tried to find Walker's Pass. But without guides or
accurate maps they were unsuccessful and proceeded on to Sutter's Fort
on the Sacramento River.3

Of this journey Corporal Dunn records:

1Journal History of the Mormon Battalion, MS, July 16, 1847.
3Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 309.
At length the remainder of the Battalion started for Salt Lake... this company was led by Bro. Levi, Hancock, Lieuts. Pace and Little. We started with the intention of going through Calhoun Pass. We crossed the last mountains which lay 40 miles back of Pueblo. These mountains are very rugged and tedious to cross, especially with wild animals which was the case with many of ours. We was [sic] in the mts. then had tolerable good roads. We had no pilots, except an Indian. By some means we passed the route before we knew it and found ourselves on the route to Sutters Fort on the Sacramento river. We then made our way to this place which is 500 miles from Pueblo.\(^1\)

Going on up the valley the men reached the first settlement of white people on August 24. Tyler says they were

...almost overjoyed to see a colony of Americans, the first we had seen since leaving Fort Leavemworth, about a year previous. But the best of all was the news brought by a man named Smith, who said he had accompanied Samuel Brannaman to meet the Church, and who informed us that the Saints were settling in the Great Salt Lake Valley. This was our first intelligence of the movements of the Church since at the Arkansas crossing.\(^2\)

The following day they rested and held a meeting in the evening as they had done often since their discharge. Of this meeting Tyler records:

Some having but a poor fit-out, wished to remain here and labor until spring, wages being good and labor in demand; besides, a settlement of the New York Saints was within a few miles. President Levi W. Hancock made some appropriate remarks on the union that had been and was among us, and thought that a few might remain and labor until spring and all would be right. He then asked the company if, in case any felt to remain, they should have our prayers and blessings. All voted in the affirmative. Good remarks were also made by others on the same subject. Wages were said to be from $25-26 per month and hands hard to get at any price, as there were so few in the country.\(^3\)

Other meetings held were evidently conducted by Hancock. Bigler records one on August 7th. After a hard day's travel and supper

...the camp was called together by the sound of Captain Averett's fife and a meeting was held in charge of Father Pettigrew and Levi W.

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1Diary of Thomas Dunn, p. 27, July 16, 1847.

2Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 310.

3Ibid., p. 311.
Hancock, who exhorted the brethren of the camp to be faithful in keeping the commandments of God. They succeeded in settling some misunderstanding that existed in camp.¹

On September sixth the returning men met Samuel Brannan returning from a trip he had made from California to meet the Saints on the plains. They learned from Brannan that the pioneers had reached Salt Lake Valley, but his description of it was not encouraging. Brannan told them that

...the Saints could not possibly subsist in the Great Salt Lake Valley, as, according to the testimony of mountaineers, it froze there every month in the year.²

Brannan considered it no place for an agricultural people and expressed his confidence that the Saints would emigrate to California the next spring. He urged the men to return to California.

The following day, Captain James S. Brown who had led the sick members of the Battalion to Pueblo for the winter and who had also reached Salt Lake and was now on his way to collect the pay of his men, arrived at their camp. He had some letters from families of the soldiers, and also a letter from the Apostles which advised those who had means of subsistence to remain in California and labor and bring their earnings the next spring. Especially was this advice given to those whose families were reported to be out on the plains still.³

Of this event Golder includes in his record a letter from Henry Bigler of the Battalion to his cousin George A. Smith. It is dated September 6, 1847, and reads in part:

...Yesterday morning we met with Elder Brannan, who informed us

¹Henry Bigler Journal, MS, August 7, 1847, as quoted in Campbell, "History of Church in California," p. 118.
²Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 315.
³Ibid., p. 315-316.
that Capt. Brown would soon meet us... He said that the Captain had a letter of general instructions, to the Battalion from the Twelve. We awaited his arrival and also for Brother Levi Hancock who is one day's march in the rear with the main camp, for we are only pioneers and Elisha Everett is our captain. Capt. Brown arrived here this morning. Bro Hancock at 8 o'clock p.m. Letters were also read and Jesse and myself will return to the California settlement which is 150 miles back in the neighborhood of Sutter's fort, as wages are good there, and fit ourselves out by spring and return to Salt Lake. 1

Following these instructions about half of the discharged Battalion members returned to spend the winter in California. The rest went on to Salt Lake Valley, arriving on October 16, 1847. 2 Levi Hancock was in this group. After a journey, long and arduous over desert and mountain by foot, he had arrived at the "promised land" of his people, as the leader of this discharged band of ex-soldiers.

So ended one of the most significant phases of Levi Hancock's life. The impact it had on Levi and others was, no doubt, far-reaching. Levi may have had no thought or realization of the importance of his decisions concerning the Battalion and his employment of these decisions on the men. Without his constant urging and fatherly direction, many of the men would undoubtedly have lost their activity in the Church. Levi was a bulwark to them against the always present temptations of military life. It is quite possible that without his influence many of the men upon discharge would have remained in California and become lost from Church contact. That Levi consistently worked with these men and that they followed him to Utah is evidence of at least two important points:

One is that Levi Hancock was stable and faithful, and a devoted

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1 Golder, March of Mormon Battalion, pp. 257-258.
2 Tyler, Mormon Battalion, p. 317.
member of his church. It is further proof of his undeviating character throughout his life in the defense of what he believed to be a righteous cause. The other point is that without his timely efforts the Church might not have had the valuable strength of these men in Utah. Levi's work, then, had a far-reaching influence on both the Church at large and on the lives of many people, some yet unborn at the time of his activities.

It should be remembered, too, that Levi accomplished all these things while enduring the same hardships on the Battalion march as the rest of the men, for he was merely one of them in the daily duties of the Battalion, being only a private in rank. All this he did at a relatively older age, too, being forty-three and forty-four years of age during the march. While this must have added to the difficulty of his trials, it has nowhere been found recorded that he complained or mentioned that it might be less than fair for him to participate in this march.

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1 The reader may note the amount of space spent on this short period, just over a year, of Hancock's life. In the opinion of the author his Battalion experience was perhaps the most interesting and pertinent chapter of his life. Certainly from the question of his position in the Battalion it is a fascinating period to contemplate.
CHAPTER VI
LIFE IN EARLY UTAH

Activities and Difficulties in Salt Lake Valley

Upon his arrival in Salt Lake Valley in the fall of 1847, Levi found that his family had not yet arrived in the Valley. He therefore determined to go eastward along the trail to find them. Apparently realizing the folly of attempting such a trip in winter, he awaited early spring before departing. President John Smith was acting President of the Church in Salt Lake City in the absence of Brigham Young, who had returned to Winter Quarters shortly after his arrival with the first group of pioneers in the Valley. President Smith wrote a letter to Brigham in Winter Quarters explaining the affairs of the Saints in the Valley during the past winter. In this letter he stated that Levi Hancock intended to leave "tomorrow" for Winter Quarters. The letter is dated March 6, 1848.¹ From this it must be concluded that Levi left March 7 to travel to find his family.

Levi did not have to travel all the way to Winter Quarters, however, for he found his family in Wyoming at Cash Cave, not far from Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Mosiah recorded: "When we got to Cash Cave we met father and brother David Pettigrew going back to the bluff for us. So father returned with us to the Valley...August 3rd we drove into the old

¹Journal History, March 6, 1848.
fort in Salt Lake Valley and went into a house or room on the West side of the north gate.  

Levi obtained a lot for his family and began a foundation for a home which he made of adobes. Their lot and home was located in the eighteenth ward in Salt Lake City. He took up his trade of carpentering, setting up a "lathe and made bedsteads, chairs, tables, cupboards,..." Life was hard and they had few of the immediate necessities such as shelter, food, and clothing. Levi strove diligently to provide them, which was no easy task in an isolated frontier land. The winter of 1848-49, according to reliable histories of Utah, was a severe winter, much more so than the first winter in the Valley had been. The Utah settlers were reduced to eating sego roots, pøgweeds, thistle roots, and soup made out of rawhide. Mosiah Hancock recorded some of the difficult times they experienced. It was necessary for him to go barefoot searching for wood. His feet became frozen and he suffered immensely.

His father's family found it necessary to eat their ox which had drowned in a spring. Since the animal had been in too long when they found him they could only save such parts as the liver, heart, kidneys, intestines, and the like. From these they made what they called "Chitlines." Mosiah wrote: I thought the meat was splendid, even though he was 20 years old and had served us faithfully. However, my tender-hearted mother shed tears to think that we had to eat him in our afflictions.  

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1Mosiah Hancock Journal, pp. 39-40.

2Ibid., p. 40.


4Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 42.
The famine of 1848-49 lasted all summer into July and until the harvest was taken when they did reap considerable wheat and other crops. One bright scene in the picture occurred when the '49 gold miners came through on their way to California. Many of the goods they carried were obtained by the Mormons in Salt Lake City. The Hancocks tasted their first bread since the year before, through the goodness of some of the forty-miners. They were also able to obtain flour, coffee, (which, Mosiah stated, they traded for something else later), and bacon; and Mosiah obtained a new suit, and a "nice library of books." They acquired these goods from the miners by performing services that they desired while in Salt Lake City.

Fall brought further reprieve with a fairly good harvest of crops. Andrew Neff records the following about the abundant crops, and of Levi Hancock's unusual harvest:

An Epistle from the Council in the Valley, dated August 9, 1848, contained these extracts..."You now learn definitely that our wheat harvest has far exceeded our expectations. Green peas have been so plentiful for a long time that we are becoming tired of them; cucumbers, squashes, beets, carrots, parsnips and greens are upon our tables, as harbingers of abundance in their respective departments."

The climax to the specific extracts quoted above, comes an astonishing marvelous recital of crop results as told in the summarized language of Thomas Bullock: A miracle indeed when Elder Levi Hancock sowed eleven pounds of weight of California wheat on the 11th of April, and reaped twenty-two bushels the latter part of July; he sowed half a bushel of English common wheat, on an acre and a half and reaped upwards of twenty bushels..."

What few necessities Levi did have he freely shared with others. Levi was apparently so liberal with his material goods, as he had always

1 Ibid., p. 444.

been in his life, that his family on occasions, perhaps not too infrequently, did not share freely in these things. These feelings were expressed by his son Mosiah:

It was late before I could get up our winter's wood...It was very cold before we got our wood; the first load I got was at the head of Little North Canyon. My brother Francis Marion and I went up on Christmas day. Mother doled out two spoonfuls of bran mush to us before we started. Some might ask: "Where was all the meal gone that you brought from Council Bluffs?" I answered: "It was all gone—the 27 bushels of corn meal was gone every whit; not a particle remained. If we had only our own family we would have had enough, but mother's judgment run—not for others when we started from the Indian Mills. She had calculated bread-stuff to last us one year; but there was none to speak of raised in the valley for us. We were supposed to have been considered as father was in the Battalion. When we came in there was always a herd [horde] eating at our table; and there was no Elijah to tell us that our bread should not fail. So it failed on Christmas Day. Oh! the stomachs that were filled from our small pile—mostly Battalion boys. We children would often look at the table with pale anxious faces and wish that all of us together could just have what one of those idol [sic] gluttons was destined to eat, but no, their guts showed us no mercy.1

This bitter report reveals the unhappy feelings of Levi's children at the way in which many of the necessities of life were "shared" with others. Not too many years later most of his sons left the L.D.S. Church because of bitter feelings engendered by what they felt were injustices. These feelings undoubtedly had their beginnings in such circumstances as the one just related. Only Mosiah remained in the Church and it is he who gave this caustic report. It will be noted that this circumstance of sharing was with the Battalion men. Probably few people, especially his wife and children, realized what an attachment and sense of responsibility Levi felt for these men. Even after discharge, when they were back in the Valley, he must have felt a great concern for their welfare.

1Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 40.
in order to continue to care for them as he did.

There were, however, even more unhappy occurrences in Levi's life as a result of his devotion to his church and his fellowmen. Not only did he see his sons lose their loyalty to the Church, but his wife, Clarissa, became estranged from him. One of the reasons might have been because she could not continue to endure the lack of attention she received from him. Levi was apparently so busy in the Church with his official duties and also in sharing with and helping others that he neglected the needs of his own family. For him to give most of the food she had brought across the plains at great cost of effort and care, to the Battalion boys was more than she could understand. She was separated from him sometime in 1850 while they were living in Salt Lake City. She later married John White in 1854 and had other children by him.1

Levi had previously entered into the practice of plural marriage, having married his second wife, Emily Malissa Richie, about two years earlier. He later took other wives. Family tradition asserts that there were three more, making a total of five wives.2

Continued Church Activities

Through the many difficulties that he experienced in his life, Levi Hancock remained faithful to the Church. He was active in many of the affairs of the Church and the settlement of Salt Lake Valley and other communities in the territory of Utah. Andrew Jenson says of Levi: "From

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1Interview with Mrs. Jack (Geraldine) Harrison, descendant of Levi Hancock, July 26, 1965, Provo, Utah.

2Mrs. Clara Lloyd, in typing her grandfather's diary, suggests that marriages to two of these alleged wives cannot be proved. See Levi Hancock, p. VII.
that time [his arrival in Salt Lake Valley] until his demise he labored assiduously for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God and for making the wilderness a fit place for the habitation of man. He traveled extensively throughout the Territory in the interest of the Seventies and the Church generally."

The following extracts from the Journal History of the Church are somewhat indicative of a few of Levi's activities while still in Salt Lake Valley:

Thursday, October 26, 1848. At a meeting of Seventies held in G.S.L. City, Jedediah M. Grant, Henry Harriman and Levi W. Hancock gave the Seventies good instruction and it was decided to commence a new Seventies record.

December 21, 1848. Companies were organized for the purpose of carrying on a war of extermination against raven, hawks, owls, wolves, foxes, etc., then alive in Salt Lake Valley. The company with the fewest trophies furnished a social for the others. Two companies of 180 men (total). Captains were John D. Lee and John Pack. [Levi was listed as a member of Lee's company.]

Saturday, July 21, 1849. Addison Pratt received his endowments on Ensign Hill, the place being consecrated for the purpose. Pres. Young and Elders Isaac Morley, Parley P. Pratt, Lorenzo Snow, Charles C. Rich, Franklin D. Richards, Levi W. Hancock, Henry Harriman, and Jedidiah M. Grant being present.2

As a member of the Council of the Seventy and thus a General Authority of the Church, Levi was always present at the General Conferences of the Church. These were held in Salt Lake City twice a year in April and October. He was frequently listed as one of the speakers.

It should also be noted that Levi assisted in getting the emigrants still on the plains to Great Salt Lake Valley. He did so by sending his

1Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, p. 189.

2Journal History, October 26, 1848; December 21, 1848; July 21, 1849.
teams of oxen back on the trail for this purpose. There were undoubtedly many other valuable contributions in goods and labor given by Levi Hancock of which there is no record. It can probably be safely assumed that Levi contributed his share to the aid of the people and the settlement of the Valley. Even prior to the arrival of the Saints in the Valley, Levi, along with many others, had pledged himself to Brigham Young to assist in helping the poor to Utah.¹

Hancock Moves South - Becomes Legislator

For reasons which are not entirely clear, Levi left Salt Lake Valley in 1850, after two years there. This was the same year that his first wife, Clarissa, left him after seventeen years of marriage. Perhaps he felt greatly distressed by the loss of his wife and decided to settle elsewhere. Another possible motive has been suggested by one of his descendants. Some of them feel that though Levi was loved and appreciated very highly by Joseph Smith (as is also borne out through his journal), he did not find the same relationship with President Brigham Young.² It may have been that he left Salt Lake Valley in order to have less direct contact with President Young, although Mosiah in his journal made a comment that would seem to indicate otherwise. He wrote: "I know that Brigham Young thought well of father."³ At any rate, Levi did move around a great deal, perhaps thinking, in his great zeal, that he might be of use to the building up of the Church and the settlements. These several moves took

¹Tullidge, Edward W., History of Salt Lake City, (Salt Lake City, Starr Printing Co., 1886), p. 637.
²Interview with Mrs. Geraldine Harrison, July 26, 1965.
³Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 53.
him, finally, to Washington in southern Utah, where he lived out his last days.

Hancock's first move in 1850 was to Utah County. It cannot be easily determined just where he resided. There is a record of his "re-baptism" in Payson on April 7, 1851.¹ This would seem to indicate that he probably lived in this city. It can be definitely established that he lived in Payson following his move from Manti, thus giving some indication that Payson may also have been his original residence in Utah County.

His activities in Utah County are also sketchily recorded, but it is definitely known that he was elected to the Legislature while living there. He represented Utah County in the First Territorial Legislature of Utah in 1851. Concerning the creation of the Utah Territory and the formulation of its government the Journal History reads:

September 18, 1851. The following is a quote from a proclamation by Brigham Young, Governor of the Territory of Utah:

"Whereas, by the...Section of the Act to establish a Territorial Government for the Territory of Utah, approved, Sept. 9, 1850, it is made the duty of the Governor to declare the persons who have been duly elected in each council district, and the members also elected to be members of the House of Representatives;--Now, therefore, I, Brigham Young, Governor of said Territory, and in pursuance of the directions, and by virtue of the authority invested in me by said act, do hereby make Proclamation that the following named persons received the highest number of votes in their respective districts for councillors and representatives, to wit...for Utah County... representatives, David Evans, William Miller, Levi W. Hancock."²

J. Marinus Jensen wrote that the election in which Levi was elected representative was held August 1, 1851.³ Tullidge also tells of Levi's

¹Records of Payson Ward, Utah Stake to 1891, Church Historian's Office.
²Journal History, Sept. 18, 1851.
election as a representative from Utah County and further he gives the
dates of the first session of the Legislature to which Levi was elected
to serve:

The first session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory
of Utah, was convened in pursuance of the proclamation of the
Governor, on the 22nd day of September, A. D. 1851; and continued
by adjournments to the 18th day of February, A. D. 1852. This was
succeeded by a special session, called by proclamation of the
Governor, and convened the day following, continuing until the 6th
day of March, A.D. 1852.¹

Thus Levi W. Hancock had the distinction of serving in the first
and original Legislature of the newly-created government of the Territory
of Utah. As can be seen, Levi spent most of his time while a resident
of Utah County in Salt Lake City attending the sessions of the Legislature.
He probably had little time to accomplish a great deal at his home.

Hancock apparently remained in Utah County for about two years or
less, for there are references to him as a resident of Sanpete County by
1852. Two of these references are dated the forepart of July, 1852. One
tells of him being nominated as a candidate for representative to the
Legislative Assembly, this time from Sanpete County. In February of 1852
an act was passed apportioning the representation of Utah Territory.
Sanpete County was allotted one seat. Again the History of Sanpete Stake
reads as follows:

July 1852: At a public meeting of the citizens of Manti, the
following persons were nominated for candidates to fill the various
offices named: For representative, Levi W. Hancock...²

The Journal History of the Church quoting the Deseret News also
recorded this same nomination of Levi as candidate to the Legislature

¹Tullidge, History of Salt Lake City, p. 81.
²History of Sanpete Stake, 1847-1900, Church Historian's Office, p. 29.
from Sanpete County.\(^1\) However, Hancock evidently did not serve in this body of government from Sanpete County. The reason is not clear, but his name is not found in the lists of legislators. A recently discovered Journal of the Territorial Legislature, owned by Franklin D. Richards, containing the minutes of the first several sessions of the Legislature, shows Hancock on the roster of the House of Representatives for the first session from Utah County held in 1851-52. For succeeding sessions, however, his name is not among those listed from either Utah or Sanpete County. The positions were apparently filled by the men whose names appear in this record. The minutes contained in this Journal do record some of the activities of Hancock as a legislator. He served on the Committee on Agriculture and Industry. A number of bills concerning the activities of this committee and other items of business were passed and acted on by motion of Levi Hancock, according to the record.\(^2\)

While serving in the first Territorial Legislature, Hancock had a part in handling some of the interesting problems that arose. One of them was concerned with the federal judges of the Territory. One such judge, a Judge Brocchus, "especially was a vain and ambitious man, full of self-importance, fond of intrigue, corrupt, revengeful, hypocritical."\(^3\) In public speeches he offended the Saints and accused them of immorality, and accused Brigham Young of handling the elections improperly. Among the first matters of business considered by the Legislature were the charges

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\(^1\)Journal History, July 3, 1852.

\(^2\)Journal of Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, 1852-59, BYU Library, Special Collections Section, pp. 3, 124, 126, 130.

\(^3\)Bancroft, History of Utah, p. 456.
against Judge Brocchus. On the 28th of September, the Judge and other

government appointees set forth for Washington, taking with them the
Territorial seal, the records, documents, and funds, which were returned
to the authorities. The following day the Legislative Assembly signed a
memorial "praying that the vacancies be filled as soon as possible."

To have been elected to the Legislature from Utah County and nom-
inated from Sanpete County indicated that Levi had qualities of leader-
ship and abilities that the people felt he could contribute. He also
served as Manti City councilman, having been elected in April of 1853.

Another reference at Manti gives an account of a July Fourth
celebration at which Levi was a participant:

Monday, July 5, 1852. This day was celebrated as Independence
Day at Manti. At nine o'clock a.m. the people assembled in the
fort. After the reading of the Declaration of Independence by
Phineas W. Cook, Messrs. Levi W. Hancock, Robert Wilson Glen, Andrew
L. Siler, and Nelson Higgins delivered orations, after which the
people formed into processions and marched around the Temple Block.

There are a number of other recorded instances when Levi was called
upon to deliver orations at important celebrations such as Independence
Day, Pioneer Day, and anniversaries of events such as the March of Zion's
Camp and the March of the Mormon Battalion.

An even earlier reference from the History of Manti Stake indicated
the time Levi was in Manti and describes one of his activities. It reads:

The fort in Manti was commenced on the 27th day of May and fin-
ished on the 28th day of June, and dedicated on the 3rd day of July,

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1Ibid., p. 158-61. (Bancroft lists Levi Hancock as one of the
representatives in this assembly.)

2History of Sanpete Stake, 1849-1900, Church Historian's Office, p. 30.

3Ibid.
1852. The following list of names are those who built it, and the amount credited:...Levi W. Hancock - 3 half days...

Levi, then, was in Manti as early as May or June of 1852. Here he set up his carpentry shop and lathe and attempted the furniture business again, but in this venture he had discouraging times. People were often reluctant to pay him for his work, and when his shop burned down in 1854, with a loss of several thousand dollars, he was forced out of business. Of his move to Sanpete County Mosiah wrote:

President Young gave my father another wife, and father was called upon to strengthen Sanpete County, which he did to the best of his ability. He went to Manti and was there most of the time until August of 1853. He then came to the Legislature as a delegate for two terms. We had a machinery shop burn down in 1854, with a loss of $6,000.00. It was supposed to have been burned by the Indians. We used the machinery to make different things for the people; some paid us and some were careless...The people were so poor in paying for things we made for them that we had to give up our shop. Father took his tools to Manti where he tried the furniture business; but the result was—his shop burned down.

A letter in the Journal History dated June 4, 1854, states that:

"Brother Levi W. Hancock had his shop burned down last week, together with all his tools and spring work, consisting of spinning wheels, chairs, bedsteads, tables, etc. The fire caught from the chimney."3 This added one more misfortune to those Levi experienced as a pioneer in early Utah.

More Moves and Experiences

The burning down of his carpenter's shop apparently resulted in Levi making another move. This time he went back to Utah County where he

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1Tbid., p. 8.

2As already noted, evidence cannot be found to support this statement.

3Mosiah Hancock Journal, pp. 45-47.

4Journal History, June 4, 1854.
established his residence in Payson. Of this move Mosiah recorded:

I had come down from Payson on a visit. The first of August, I started from Payson with an ox team to meet my father, who was coming from Manti...I soon arrived where Fountain Green now is. As I was about to take a drink of water I saw my father with a gun in his arms...The next day we rested and on the following day went on to Payson and here I helped make a large house for father.¹

Not a great deal is recorded about Levi's activities during these years of residence in Payson. One entry in the Journal History reveals this interesting bit about Levi as a participant in the July 24th celebration: "Elder Levi W. Hancock, a Drum-Major, gave a specimen of the various calls used in the Battalion, & told many incidents connected with the hard & efficient service of that ever memorable band of men."²

Levi apparently lived in Payson from 1854 or 1855 to about the year 1861. There are recorded the births of children by his several wives during this time. At least five children were born between 1855 and 1860, four in Payson and one in Spanish Fork. Two of these children were twins, but one died at three weeks of age.

In February, 1862, a son was born in Salt Lake City where he had moved a few months previously. As late as 1868 a son was also born in Salt Lake City, and in February of 1871 another son was born in Leeds, Washington County. These birth dates of his children give some idea of the approximate times and places of his various residences. It is reported also that his fifth wife, if he had one, resided in Vernal, Utah.³ If this is so, though records thus far consulted do not substantiate it, it can

¹Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 51.
²Journal History, July 24, 1855.
³Interview with Mrs. Geraldine Harrison, July 26, 1965.
readily be seen that Levi was constantly on the move. One wonders how he was able to find time to raise his crops and provide for his several families.

Perhaps at this point it would be appropriate to give a brief sketch of his places of residence during the remainder of his life in Utah, thus presenting a clearer picture of him as the balance of his life is given in this history. As already stated Levi lived in Salt Lake City for about two years, from 1848 to 1850. He then moved to Utah County, probably Payson, for about the same length of time. Early in 1852 he changed his residence to Manti in Sanpete County. He returned to Utah County in 1854 and built a home in Payson with the help of his son Moseiah. Levi lived in Payson until about the year 1861, when he moved back to Salt Lake City. His residence remained there, in the tenth ward, until about the year 1866, or perhaps as late as 1868. A son, Solomon, was born to him in Salt Lake in 1868. Andrew Jenson places his move from Salt Lake in "about 1866 when he removed to southern Utah and settled in Harrisburg; afterwards he became a resident of Leeds, and still later of Washington."¹

It is known that Levi did not have all his wives living with him. Some had homes in towns other than the one in which he was residing. This could account for his child being born in Salt Lake in 1868 though his residence may have been in Southern Utah. As indicated, his remaining years were spent in southern Utah near St. George. He died in Washington in 1882.

Mention has been made of Levi's many moves and his constant travels

¹Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, p. 189.
for himself and for the Church. He must have spent a great deal of time traveling, when one remembers that a journey in that day was long and arduous. To travel from St. George in southern Utah to Salt Lake City, a distance of about three hundred miles, was no small journey.

Levi did travel a great deal for the Church. Jenson says that "he traveled extensively throughout the Territory in the interest of the Seventies and the Church generally." ¹ The Journal History of the Church is replete with references to his travels on Church business. From the years 1848 to 1866, the minutes of the General Conferences of the Church held each year in April and October show Levi present almost all of the time, and often one of the conference speakers.² It is difficult to summarize the many activities of Levi Hancock for the Church during these years of his life. Perhaps a few excerpts from the Journal History of the Church will give some idea of the travels and labors he engaged in:

A July 27, 1855, entry described Levi as escorting Apostle George A. Smith to Provo. On February 12, 1856, "the Seventies held a jubilee in the Seventies' Hall in Salt Lake City." Among the Seven Presidents of the Seventies in attendance was Levi Hancock, who gave the closing prayer. Meetings were held for three days, and Levi sang a song each day at the meetings.

On July 21, 1856, at the Pioneer Day celebration held at Spanish Fork, Levi was present and delivered one of the main speeches of the day's celebration. In October of 1859 special meetings were called by the

¹Ibid., p. 189.
²Journal History.
General Authorities for the purpose of filling vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve and the Presidents of the Seventies. Levi was called from Payson to Salt Lake City to participate in the business of these meetings. He offered prayers and spoke in the sessions. He "expressed his thankfulness for being with the Brethren and said he loved righteousness."

On October 30, 1859, a special conference of the Seventies was held at Payson. Levi Hancock addressed both sessions of the conference. "He talked on drinking and swearing. His remarks added much to the comfort and edification of those present, as could be seen in the glow of the countenance of all. He said that we ought to honor and respect every man in his calling...He testified to the divine calling of Joseph Smith." Wherever there are records of Levi's speeches, there are almost always comments as to the good spirit he carried and the message he bore. As before mentioned, he evidently was a gifted orator and speaker.

On April 7, 1860, at a General Conference of the Church held in Salt Lake City, "Elder Levi Hancock gave an account of the Mormon Battalion." Levi appears to have given frequent talks on the travels and experiences of this great march in which he participated. It is unfortunate that copies of these talks are not available. They would undoubtedly reveal many of his feelings regarding the circumstances of the Battalion and the relationships of the men and officers. He gave talks on the Battalion on occasions other than conferences also, such as jubilees and celebrations.

A reference for July 21, 1860 indicates that a circular was sent to all the Seventies of the Church, signed by the first Seven Presidents of the Seventies. Levi was second in seniority in this body of authorities and thus his name appeared in that order on the list of signatures. The
circular, which he evidently helped to write, advised them "to store wheat and foodstuffs in view of the near famine conditions existing."

Special Seventies' meetings were held on August 20, 1862, and March 20, 1863. Levi was present at these sessions and addressed each one, giving "an outline of his experiences in the Church." On October 10, 1864, a Zion's Camp Festival was held on the thirtieth anniversary of the Zion's Camp March. Another festival was held the following year, on the same date. Levi was present at these festivals. Having been a member of this march he was no doubt anxious to join in the festivities. The Journal History records that "Levi addressed the group and danced the horn-pipes." This brief reference indicated that Levi was still somewhat of a musician and retained the talent which he had used often in his life, particularly during the military marches he had been in.

Elder George A. Smith, at a conference in Ogden, November 15, 1864, said of the Zion's Camp march and Levi Hancock: "I remember well in Zion's Camp, Levi W. Hancock made a fife from a joint of Sweet Elder, Sylvester Smith marching his company to the music of that fife. That fife may be considered almost the introduction of martial music among the Mormons." If this statement is true, then Levi Hancock made a number of contributions in music and poetry.

Levi must have been a man with great faith in his Church. Some of the experiences he had might have shattered the faith of a man of lesser character. One of these occurred while he was living in Payson. It was during the time that the Church requested its members to "consecrate" their property to the Church for the general benefit of all the members. It must

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1 All the last several references are from the Journal History of the Church under the dates given above.
be assumed that not in all instances was this done in the manner the Church authorities intended it to be, for through an apparently unscrupulous bishop, Levi lost all of his property. Though he apparently remained faithful to the Church throughout his life, realizing it was a dishonest individual and not the Church which had taken advantage of him, his sons could not accept this reasoning, and in their bitterness several of them left the Church. Previous mention has been made of how his family felt when they were taken advantage of because of his unselfishness. Of this particular incident Mosiah recorded:

In 1856 he [Levi] consecrated his property to the Church, as he supposed the circumstances were on this wise. He and I were down from Payson [to Salt Lake] and Bishop Raleigh got the consecration deeds up, and he said to father one morning, "Brother Levi, If you are ready to consecrate your property to the nineteenth ward now is the time." "All right," said father. So we went over to Bishop Raleigh's residence with my uncle Samuel Alger and myself as witnesses. When we got there Raleigh said, "Brother Levi, I haven't had time to make out these deeds in full, but you put your name here and Brother Alger and Brother Mosiah put your name here," which we did. Now we were required to consecrate to Brigham Young, he being trustee for the Church. We supposed it would be filled out in his name. Some few years after we found out that the Government took it in hand to see that things were restored to their right owners. We found that the deeds had been made out to another person by the name of Thomas White for $1.50 (one dollar and fifty cents). I inquired into the affair and found by Mr. White that he had paid Mr. Raleigh sixteen hundred dollars and fifty cents for the premises. While we were toiling to build up the kingdom, those whom we had calculated as brethren were sucking our life's blood from us and taking upon themselves of Mr. so and so after the gentiles fashion. These and other things were too much for my brothers and they left the Church. The gentle mobbers had been hard on us, but the climax of exquisite grief came by the horrible profidity [perfidy] of those who we thought were our brethren.  

It must have been a shock of no small dimension to Levi to lose his property at the hands of his "brethren." How much bitterness and desire for revenge he might have felt we can only conjecture, but he appears to

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1Mosiah Hancock Journal, pp. 52-53.
have continued on with his labors in the Church with the same fervor as before.

Life in Southern Utah

In about 1861, Levi's son, Mosiah, was called to take part in the Cotton Mission. The people of Utah in those days were quite isolated from the rest of the nation, having as yet no railroad. All goods were still brought into Utah by teams and wagons. In an effort to save on the cost, and perhaps more important, to be self-sustaining, the Church authorities decided to attempt to raise cotton in southern Utah. Because of the lower elevation than is found in any other part of the state its climate is much warmer, and it was believed that cotton would do well there. For this reason it became known as Utah's "Dixie." It was to this mission that Mosiah was called by Brigham Young. It was May seventeenth of 1862 before he arrived with his family and all his belongings, which, interestingly enough, included 150 fruit trees that he brought from Salt Lake and Payson. It can be noted that he recorded that they all lived.¹

As has been said, Levi followed his son Mosiah to Dixie in about the year 1866. It can readily be seen why Levi was anxious to make this move. He was now sixty-three years old. He must have felt the loss of his youthful strength, but probably more so the loss of his son, Mosiah. He had evidently grown to depend on Mosiah a great deal. After all, he was the oldest son, and the only one (at least of his first wife, Clarissa) to remain faithful to the Church. Mosiah had stayed close to his father and been a source of comfort and great help to him. He had helped him build his

¹Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 58-60.
home and tend the crops. Now in his old age, Levi no doubt felt a need to be near Mosiah again after several years of separation, even though Mosiah had made some trips to Salt Lake City and visited his father occasionally.

Levi continued to remain active and to contribute much to the Church during the remainder of his life while in Southern Utah. He remained prominent in the communities of Southern Utah. The following quote from Karl Larsen about a wedding party at the home of John D. Lee indicates that Hancock was numbered among the respected and prominent men of the area:

Friday 20th. We gave a wedding party to my new son-in-law, Bishop W. D. Pace and my daughter Elizabeth. We had a sumptuous supper. Some 200 persons participated in the festivities of the evening and dance. Many leading men from the different settlements were present, among which was Bp. J. T. Willis of Tokerville, Bp. R. D. Covington, of the Seven Presidents of the Seventies, Henry Harriman and family, Levi Hancock, Isaac Haight and daughters and many others. The party was held in my family hall, the best room in Washington, for the occasion."1

In November of 1862 the first conference of the Southern Utah Mission was held by the Church in St. George. These conferences were held semi-annually on a similar basis as the general church conferences held in Salt Lake City. Until 1865 Levi is not listed in the minutes as being present, but after this date he was almost never absent. He was sustained at each conference, as a member of the First Council of the Seventies, along with the other authorities, each being sustained in their various positions in the Church. He was also often called upon to speak and in each talk he bore his fervent testimony to the truth of the principles of the Church. A typical entry in the Journal History or in the History

1Andrew Karl Larsen, I Was Called to Dixie, (Salt Lake City, Deseret News Press, 1961), p. 461.
of St. George Stake reads:

May 3, 1868. On this and the two preceding days, May 1st and 2nd, a very interesting conference of the Southern Mission was held at St. George...Friday 1st May, 1868. Conference of Southern Mission began. Pres. Erastus Snow presiding. Also present of the 1st Council of the Seventies; Levi W. Hancock, Henry Harriman and Jacob Gates; Elder Joseph W. Young; Elder Isaac C. Haight, Bp. Henry Lund of Cedar. 1

That Levi remained active and fervent in his Church activity is apparent by the many times he spoke in the conferences, even to the close of his years in this life. The minutes of the conference held in St. George on February 16, 1873, at which the Southern Mission was reorganized as the St. George Stake, the following was recorded concerning Levi's remarks:

Elder Levi W. Hancock said he had been a member of the Church since October 1830 and related some of the manifestations which he had received as a testimony of the truth of the Gospel. Referred to his early acquaintance with Brigham Young and said that when Brigham Young first came to mingle with the Church Joseph Smith prophesied that he should yet carry the responsibility of the church upon his shoulders. bore his testimony to the truth and desired and hoped that the Lord would preserve the servants of God and cause them to live long upon the earth. 2

Two years later, on May 7, 1875, at the St. George conference, Levi spoke and expressed his still strong testimony:

Elder Levi Hancock of the Presidents of Seventies, said he was in the evening of his days and in the common course of mortal affairs he would not continue in the state of being much longer, but his desire was fervent as ever for the welfare of God's kingdom and for the increase of his dominion on the earth. 3

Even in his older years of life Levi continued to travel for the Church and fulfill his duties as President of the Council of the Seventies:

1Journal History, same dates; also see History of St. George Stake, Vol. I, Church Historian's Office, p. 226.
3Tbid., Vol. II, p. 556.
"July 18, 1868. At a School of the Prophets held in Salt Lake City, George Q. Cannon, Levi W. Hancock, Wilford Woodruff, and Pres. Daniel H. Wells spoke."

Traveling to Salt Lake from St. George was no doubt a tiring journey for Levi. On December 30, 1868: "Levi W. Hancock had visited Cedar, spent several days and held five meetings, at which the people enjoyed themselves much, and Brother Hancock left for his home in Dixie full of good feelings and blessings to the brethren of Cedar."2

Added to the many accomplishments of his life was one more assignment which he filled during the last ten years of his life. In about the year 1872 he was ordained a Patriarch in the St. George Stake, "in which capacity he blessed thousands of the Saints."3 The giving of these many blessings to members of the Church required a great deal of his time and faith. He also continued to attend the regular conferences, he held a number of special Seventies' meetings for all the Seventies of the Church in that area, he was present at the ground-breaking services of the St. George Temple, and he traveled about on Church duties.

One interesting and probably thrilling occasion for him was to attend the Golden Jubilee of the Church held in 1880, which was two years before his death. This Jubilee was a special conference of the Church which observed the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Church, which had taken place April 6, 1830. Joseph Young and Levi W. Hancock

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1 Journal History, July 18, 1868.
2 Ibid., December 30, 1868.
3 Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, p. 189.
were honored as the only two surviving members of the original First Council of the Seventy of the Church. Both the men participated in the Jubilee conference.¹

Conclusion

If the lives of more of the settlers and early members of the Church were written, many of them would be similar to that of Levi Hancock. In presenting an account of the life of this man, it is but describing the activities and accomplishments of the Church in its functions, and in the colonization of Utah by the Church. Certainly many men contributed a great deal to this work. Many gave of their time, talents, means and tremendous faith, as did Levi Hancock. It was because of this kind of people that Utah could be settled permanently. It took enough of this caliber of person to make it last.

There can be little doubt that Levi Hancock was a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the whole of his life. There can be little doubt that he contributed much to the colonizing and settling of early Utah. He added his energy and abilities in political affairs, in music, speech, and in the general good and development of all the communities in which he resided.

It is true that Hancock was an idealist, but then most Mormons were, made so by the nature of Mormon philosophy—and for that matter they still are. So much so was Hancock that at times he was not a realist. He had so much faith that his work was true and of divine origin that his dedication seemed to know few bounds. This strong and selfless devotion

brought him problems. It created conflicts between himself and members of his family, who, at times, could not understand why they so often came second to what was to him righteous service to his Church.

Thus Hancock was an unusual man in many ways. He was a breed apart from most men, putting a single-minded concentration into his Church work. He believed so fervently in his religion that he became a "visionary" man. Or perhaps because he was "visionary" he gave strong devotion to the Church. He often had dreams or "impressions" which to him were signs of God's acceptance or direction of his work. To him they had purpose and meaning. Who can say for sure that they did or did not? Because of his sincerity one could not conclude that any of Hancock's motives were for personal gain or self-aggrandizement.

While a faithful son's assessment of his father could seldom be anything but overly biased in his favor, the following words of Levi's son, Mosiah, summarize in apparent truth the qualities of his enduring character:

Behold, I have seen my noble father untiring in the persecutions heaped upon him by the mobbers of Christianity, untiring in his exertions in defending the Prophets of God; untiring of getting the poor from the mobocracy; untiring in his exertions in taking the Mormon Battalion through in the spirit of the Gospel that they might not fail to receive the reward for all their toil over the desert and chilly mountains, until he, through the direst exposure, became paralyzed on his right side; until he was unable to hold his hand still; after all these things to still be sent forth to strengthen the outskirts of those people, and still in his emaciated condition standing nobly to the rock, pay or no pay, until through the goodness of God he sank like a warrior, taking his rest with his Priesthood upon him. 1

His obituary, printed in the "Deseret News" sums up briefly and aptly his life and character:

1 Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 53.
June 15, 1882. Death of Levi W. Hancock—President John Taylor has received information from President J. D. T. McAllister to the effect that Elder Levi W. Hancock died at 12 o'clock on the 10th inst., at Washington, Kane [?] County. The funeral was conducted at the latter place at one o'clock on the 12th.

Deceased was up to the time of his death, the oldest living member of the quorum of the 1st Seven Presidents of Seventies, having been set apart to that position in 1835, and was associated with the Church from shortly after its organization in this dispensation. He was a good, upright, unassuming man, of refreshing simplicity of character and unblemished integrity to the principle of righteousness.¹

Perhaps the last sentence best describes his character traits.

A quiet, unpretentious man he was, doing without thought of acclaim what he devoutly believed to be right. His simple faith and honest loyalty were the marks of his life.

¹Journal History, June 15, 1882.
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LEVI WARD HANCOCK

PIONEER, SOLDIER, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADER OF EARLY UTAH

An Abstract of
A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Dennis A Clegg
April 1966
ABSTRACT

LEVI W. HANCOCK - PIONEER, SOLDIER, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADER OF EARLY UTAH

Prominent in the pioneering and settlement of early Utah were many men of great ability. Among them was Levi Ward Hancock. He became a dedicated spiritual leader in the Mormon Church.

The life of Levi Hancock began in Springfield, Massachusetts, on April 7, 1803. His father moved about quite often in his attempts to provide a better livelihood for his family. Each move took them farther west. It was while they were living in Ohio that the Hancock family heard the Mormon missionaries preach their new gospel. Levi joined this frontier religion.

Joining the Mormon Church changed the whole course of Hancock's life. He immediately became active and was sent on several missions. Some were preaching and proselyting missions; others were for other purposes. One such mission, known as Zion's Camp, was sent to Missouri to relieve what the Mormons believed to be the oppression of their members living there. The intended purpose of the mission failed, but from this group of tried and tested men came the future leaders of the Church. Levi Hancock was selected to be a member of the First Council of the Seventy. This group of seven men presided over the affairs of the Seventy, one of the lay groups of Priesthood in the Mormon Church.

The Mormon Church was centered at different times in Kirtland, Ohio; Jackson County, Missouri; and Nauvoo, Illinois, during the 1830's and 1840's. The members suffered much affliction. Hancock had a part in these events and affairs of the Church.
When the Mormons, because of persecution, decided to leave Illinois and find a place of refuge in the Great Basin, Hancock took his family and traveled west also. While camped along the river in Iowa, Hancock responded to a call from the United States Government, along with five hundred other Mormon men, to form a battalion of soldiers to fight in the Mexican War. This chapter was one of the highlights of his life. Hancock became the recognized spiritual leader of the men of the Battalion and was influential in their lives.

After discharge in California, he led a large group of the Battalion men to Salt Lake Valley. From there he went across the pioneer trail, where he met his family in Wyoming and brought them back to the Valley. He first settled in Salt Lake Valley, but later made several moves and thus became a part of the colonizing of early Utah communities. In addition to Salt Lake Valley, he lived in Utah County, Sanpete County, and Washington County. He served in the first Territorial Legislature of the Territory of Utah, representing Utah County.

He was a carpenter and cabinet maker by trade and contributed his skill in building the homes of pioneers. He was also a poet and wrote a great deal of verse about the Battalion march and other phases of pioneer life. He became a Patriarch in the Mormon Church during the last ten years of his life while living in Washington County.

Levi Hancock was a quiet, unassuming man who was fully devoted to his religion. He contributed freely in goods and services to his Church. He spent his life in promoting the growth of the Territory of Utah and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When he died on June 10, 1882, he was the last living member of the original First Council of Seventy in the Church.