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Samuel Brannan: Speculator in Mexican Lands

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART I. BIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I. EARLY LIFE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip To California</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with Brigham Young</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. CALIFORNIA AND MEXICO</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Rush</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican Lands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART II. MEXICAN LANDS</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE MEXICAN BONDS</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Intervention in Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ochoa Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legion of Honor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mexican Bonds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE FIRST AND SECOND LAND GRANTS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonization Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo City Company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities in Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Land Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaymas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Land Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Many historically prominent men have an unwritten chapter in their life. Such a man is Samuel Brannan. As an early Mormon leader he led a ship load of immigrants to California in 1846. He was one of the principal heralds of the gold discovery, and through his speculations became California's first millionaire.

Much has been written about Brannan, especially about his activities in the Vigilance Committee of 1851, his part in the gold rush, and his speculations at Calistoga and elsewhere. What then is the justification for another thesis about this California pioneer?

In the first place, little of the writing deals with the last years of Brannan's life, even though during these years he participated in many important activities. During the Maximilian interlude in Mexico, Brannan helped representatives of the Juarez government raise money in the United States. He was given bonds in return for his services. These bonds were not redeemed for several years, but when they were, Brannan asked for land rather than cash and received several land grants in Mexico. The last ten years of his life were spent trying to develop these lands. This period of Brannan's life is still relatively unknown. Florence McClure Dunlap, who in 1928 wrote a Masters thesis at the University of
California on Brannan, saw this need for additional study when she said: "Many incidents of his life, however, still remain more or less unknown, so that much interesting information may still be found concerning his early life, his investments in Honolulu, in Nevada and his contract with Mexico. All efforts in these directions at present have been of little avail."

A look at the major writings about Brannan will show even more clearly the need for an additional study: The first biography of Brannan was James A. B. Scherer's *The First Forty-niner and the Story of the Golden Tea Caddy*, published in 1925. This romantically written biography looks back to the "glory" of the pioneer period with loving devotion. It is a very uncritical look at the "first forty-niner" who actually came in forty-six, which almost deifies the man.

The next study, Miss Dunlap's unpublished thesis, "Samuel Brannan," was certainly more scholarly. It was a good beginning of Brannan's life story, but only that. Although it covered his California activities quite well, many areas of his life were not sufficiently covered. The author also accepted too uncritically many newspaper and other secondary accounts.

Paul Bailey, a Mormon, was doing research for *The Gay Saint*, a novel about Brannan and his activities in California; he found the man so interesting that he decided to write a biography about him. *Sam Brannan and the California Mormons* (1943) was the result. Bailey's Mormonism proved both a help and a hindrance in writing the book. His biography shows the best understanding of the operation of the Mormon Church—
essential in an understanding of Brannan's early life. However, it also caused him to become, in some places, almost a proponent for the church. Bailey updated and greatly improved his book in 1953, and it was republished for a third time in 1959.

Another biography of Brannan, Reva Scott's *Samuel Brannan and the Golden Fleece, San Francisco's Forgotten Jason*, appeared the next year, 1944. This was by far the longest biography—462 pages. She used many new sources and incidents to tell the story. She found some letters from Samuel Brannan to his nephew, Alexander Badlam, written while Brannan was in Mexico. Scott added to the knowledge of Brannan's activities in Mexico, but the story remains very sketchy. The greatest problem with the book is that Scott chose to use imaginary dialogue to tell the story. The dialogue often causes one to wonder how much of it is Brannan, and how much Scott.

The latest biography of Brannan was Louis Stellman's *Samuel Brannan, Builder of San Francisco*, published in 1953. Stellman did not include any footnotes, and used a bibliographical essay rather than a bibliography. He did a great deal of his research by interviewing people acquainted with the places or people in Brannan's life. Stellman did not understand the Mormon Church—he saw a great power conflict between Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. He also wrote almost sensationallly. He dramatically pictured Brannan, with help from his mother, running away to Ohio to escape conflicts with his father.

There have been other scholarly writings dealing with
the pioneer. Mary William's study of the Vigilance Committee of 1851, Eugene Campbell's study of his "apostasy" from the Mormon Church, and several others which can be found in the bibliography of this thesis. None of these studies, however, have centered on his later years.

On the other hand, there has been a group of scholars, mostly in California, who have approached the problem indirectly. These men, studying Mexican-American relations during the Maximilian interlude in Mexico have found much about Brannan's role in the Juarez government's efforts to finance its struggle with the foreign prince. Robert W. Frazer did an excellent study of the bond negotiations in his article: "The Ochoa Bond Negotiations of 1865-1867," published in the Pacific Historical Review (1942). Robert Ryal Miller wrote a dissertation at the University of California at Berkeley entitled: "Mexican Secret Agents in the United States, 1861-1867." Parts of his dissertation were published as an article in the California Historical Society Quarterly in 1958 entitled, "Californians Against the Emperor." These men have utilized many new sources, especially government documents, in telling about the bond negotiations. This material has yet to be used in a study centering on Brannan.

The study of the last years of Brannan's life is now possible because of a new primary source which has recently been discovered. During these last years, Brannan was looking for men to help him bring about a rush into his Mexican lands. One of the men he contacted was Jesse C. Little. Little became
Brannan's agent in Utah and much of the Intermountain West. Little and Brannan had met each other years before when both were Mormons in New England. They met and wrote irregularly during the next few years. When Brannan left the Mormon Church, Jesse Little remained, and the two lost touch for many years. When Brannan was looking for help, he wrote to Little, and the two began to correspond regularly. The letters from Brannan to Little have recently been found in the possession of Jesse C. Little's descendants and given to the Brigham Young University Library. They have contributed the major primary source for this thesis.

These letters have been relied upon even though several of the incidents reported in them can not be verified from other sources. This has sometimes resulted in a rather one sided view of an event. A search has been made to find additional governmental and business records but without success. There may be additional materials available in Mexican archives which have not been searched for this study.
PART I.

BIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE, 1819-1847

Comparatively little is known about the early life of Samuel Brannan. He was born in Saco, Maine, on March 2, 1819, and spent his younger years there. He was the youngest child of Thomas Brannan and his second wife Sarah. When Samuel was fourteen, he left home and moved to Ohio. He found a new home with his married sister, Mary Ann Badlam, and her husband, Alexander. While he lived with them he studied the printing trade and became a journeyman printer.

Brannan had moved near the headquarters of the Mormon Church when he came to Painesville, Ohio. The main body of the Mormons had come from Western New York, where the church had been organized to Kirtland, Ohio. The events surrounding Brannan's conversion to Mormonism remain hidden, but it is clear that within two years of his arrival in Ohio, he had joined the church, as had his sister and brother-in-law. Brannan's name is listed as one of those who labored faithfully on the Mormon temple in Kirtland, and he was given a special blessing because of the work.¹

The Panic of 1837 struck the Mormon village hard, as it did most of the nation. The banking society organized there collapsed, and much dissention arose in the church. This crash may have caused Samuel Brannan to leave Ohio. It is not known that he was involved in land speculations in the area, but a sketch collected by H. H. Bancroft in 1882, which claimed to be based upon dictation said:

... great excitement in land speculation ... prevailed, in 1836-37, and he betook himself to the scene of the action: but the great crash came and like many other enterprising young men he too sustained a temporary loss.²

Whether because of losses in land speculation, the poor economic conditions brought by the Panic of 1837, disillusionment with the Mormon Church, or simply a seeking for better opportunities, Samuel Brannan left Ohio and traveled over much of the United States. He went on an ocean voyage with his brother to New Orleans and helped edit a literary journal there. Bailey says that yellow fever struck the city, and his brother and many others died.³ Brannan left New Orleans and traveled from city to city finding work as a printer. It appears likely that this was the first opportunity Brannan had to assert his independence. This new feeling of freedom combined with a mind that was constantly searching for new

² "Honorable Samuel Brannan a Biographical Sketch," 1882, original in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

opportunities were undoubtedly the directing forces in these early travels.

Apparently Brannan found that "the grass was not always greener on the other side of the fence," and he returned to Ohio. From this time on Brannan was to make comparatively few moves. He became engaged in seeking the opportunities available in his locality and did not exhibit this random search for new openings in distant areas.

With Brannan's return to Ohio came a return to close association with the Mormon Church. During his travels he had been separated from the church and activity in it, but his return ended this. He was soon serving on a mission for the church, trying to bring others to the new gospel he had espoused. Shortly thereafter he was called by the church leaders to help publish The Prophet, the church newspaper in New York City.

I. NEW YORK

Brannan's church activities in New York were exemplary. His training in printing was valuable for the paper, and he worked hard in the office. He became a leader of the church in the New York area and publisher of the paper. William Smith lauded him in a letter telling of his appointment:

It will be conducted and edited hereafter by Elder Brannan, whom we look upon as a worthy man of God, true to his trust in defense of the plan of salvation, and to whose perseverance and untiring exerting we must credit the present existence.

\[4\text{William Smith, "To Our Patrons," The Prophet (New York), November 23, 1844.}\]
Under Brannan's direction, a bid was made for more subscribers, the paper was enlarged, and special features were included. John L. Stephens' *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* was serialized. This was especially interesting to the Mormons, because of their use of the *Book Of Mormon*, which they claimed was a scriptural history of ancient America.

Even with the new subscriptions, Brannan had to engage in other business enterprises to make ends meet. He sold books at the *Prophet* office, and wrote and printed tracts for the church. He also started a real estate business. Many Mormons were leaving the East to join the main body of the church in Nauvoo, Illinois and were searching for buyers for their property. Brannan advertised in *The Prophet* that he would find buyers for a percentage of the sale, and if there were no sale, there would be no fee. These activities are very characteristic of Brannan. He did not allow all of his energies to be directed toward a limited goal. While most of his effort in New York was in support of the Mormon Church, he still searched for new avenues and directions to pursue. This is certainly in the pattern of the rest of his life, which was spent searching for and developing one new program after another.

While in New York, publishing was not the only church activity in which he engaged. He spent part of his time traveling throughout the "mission" preaching in several branches of the church. He explained various principles in Boston,

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Lowell, Peterborough, New Hampshire, Salem, New Bedford, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn. He was appointed as President of the branch of the church in New York City and presided over the congregation there.

Samuel Brannan appeared to be a devoted and enthusiastic member of the Mormon Church. However, in April, 1845, a notice appeared in the Nauvoo Neighbor, the official publication of the church from the headquarters in Nauvoo, Illinois, excommunicating Brannan. The charges against Brannan grew out of a peculiar Mormon doctrine—polygamy. The Mormons felt that under certain circumstances it was permissible to take more than one wife. Polygamy was not publicly announced until 1853, and its practice before that was carefully regulated. Rumors of the practice reached several members of the church who started their own unauthorized form of the doctrine.

William Smith, brother of Joseph Smith founder of the church, was the president of the mission in the New York area. He was one of the people who formulated and practiced his own brand of polygamy. He enlisted the aide of George J. Adams, a converted actor, and they preached the new doctrine to Samuel Brannan, who accepted it and helped preach it. Brannan may also have practiced the new doctrine. While in New York he married Ann Eliza Cowin, the daughter of a new Mormon convert.

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6 "Elder Sam Brannan," The Prophet, August 31, 1844, and December 21, 1844.
8 Nauvoo Neighbor, April 16, 1845.
It has been claimed that when Brannan left Ohio for New York that he also left a wife, Hattie Hatch. Whether he practiced polygamy or merely preached the principle, it was an unauthorized version of the doctrine and sure to come under censure when the authorities from Nauvoo discovered it.

Wilford Woodruff, one of the Mormon apostles, visited the Eastern States Mission on his way to England and discovered the state of affairs there. He wrote a letter to church headquarters in Nauvoo, and as a result Brannan and Adams were excommunicated. Parley P. Pratt, who had been appointed leader of the mission when William Smith returned to Nauvoo, encouraged Brannan to go to Nauvoo to defend his membership in the church. Brannan accepted the advice and wrote an article for The Prophet telling of his excommunication and his proposed trip to Nauvoo and then left for the Illinois town.

Samuel Brannan had friends in Nauvoo who started working to have his membership restored. William Smith and others

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10 Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, ed. Brigham H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1948), VII, p. 312. See also; "History of the Trials of Elder John Hardy Before the Church of Latter Day Saints in Boston, for Slander, in saying that G. J. Adams, S. Brannan and William Smith were Licentious Characters," (n.p. October 7, 1844).


12 "Notice to the Church Abroad," The Prophet, May 10, 1845.
appealed the ruling to the twelve Apostles, and Brannan's membership was restored. However, word of the action did not reach Brannan before he left for Nauvoo, and even after he arrived he may not have known because he appealed to Brigham Young and the other apostles and was asked to appear before them. As a result of this meeting Brannan's membership in the church was restored for the second time.\textsuperscript{13}

Brannan was not only reinstated in the church, but he was also given a new assignment. He and Orson Spencer were appointed to appeal to the governor of Illinois for protection for the membership of the church. Earlier that year Joseph Smith, founder of the church, had been shot by a mob at Carthage, Illinois. This act of violence had not satisfied the enemies of the church, and conflicts between the Mormons and their "gentile" neighbors were increasing in tempo. Brigham Young and the other apostles who were now leading the church were anxious to receive state protection from these mobs. Therefore they felt that a special envoy to the governor was necessary, not only to ask for protection, but to determine his feelings toward the church. The governor offered personal friendship, and said that he would do all in his power to stop the conflict, but that, "he durst not trust the best militia in the state to defend the Mormons. They would go to the side

\textsuperscript{13}A notice appeared in the Times and Seasons April 15, 1845 restoring Brannan's membership. Brannan did not arrive in Nauvoo until April 23, 1845, and his membership was again restored on April 24th. Times and Seasons, April 15, 1845, p. 879. Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. Brigham H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1948), VII, p. 417.
II. TRIP TO CALIFORNIA

With the assignment completed Brannan returned to New York and his work with the Prophet which had been suspended during his absence. The name of the paper was changed to the Messenger, and much of Samuel Brannan's time was spent trying to keep the paper publishing. A new opportunity soon changed his life. The Mormons had decided to leave Illinois and journey to the West in the spring of 1846. As part of this general exodus to a new Zion in the west Brannan was instructed by Brigham Young to lead a group of Saints from the East. He was told to outfit a ship and take it around the Horn to San Francisco.\(^1\)

Brannan worked with great energy trying to organize the company and outfit the ship. He called upon the Saints in the East to help. One of the most active in helping was Jesse C. Little, who had been appointed by the church as President of the Eastern States Mission. Little, who was later to play an important role in Brannan's land speculations in Mexico, collected at least two hundred and fifty dollars for the voyage.\(^2\)

Brannan ran into an unforeseen difficulty, when a

\(^1\)Ibid, p. 423.

\(^2\)Brigham Young to Samuel Brannan, September 15, 1845, Ibid, p. 445.

\(^3\)Original receipt signed by Brannan in the possession of Mrs. Franklin Walton, Centerville, Utah.
representative of A. G. Benson and Company of New York told him that the national government was preparing to stop the Mormon's move to the West. The representative said that because of the trouble caused by earlier filibustering expeditions the United States was under treaty obligation to stop any armed group which headed for Mexican territory. However, the representative continued, there was a solution. The company had influence in the government—especially through Amos Kendall, former postmaster general for Andrew Jackson, and a confident of the Polk administration. The company offered to use this influence to prevent government interference with the Mormons in exchange for land. The company knew that Brannan was going to the San Francisco Bay region, and it wanted the Mormons to take up large amounts of land there. The land thus claimed would be divided between the church and the Benson company with every other section going to the church and the remaining sections going to the company. Brannan accepted the contract, signed it, and sent it to Brigham Young for church approval, with the following note:

I am aware that it is a covenant with death, but we know that God is able to break it, and will do it, the children of Israel from Egypt had to make covenants for their safety and leave it for God to break them.\(^\text{17}\)

Brannan's motives in signing the contract are obscure. His letters to Brigham Young seem to indicate that he was convinced that there was a good chance of governmental interference

\(^{17}\)Smith, VII, 588.
unless the agreement was signed. It may also have been done to satisfy some secret agreement between Brannan and the company. The supplies taken by the Brooklyn are impressive, in addition to provisions for the trip they took agricultural and mechanical implements for eight hundred men, three grain mills, printing equipment, and other like supplies. The Saints in the East were poor, and some of the supplies may have come from Benson's funds.

Brigham Young and the other leaders considered the proposal which they felt was another evidence of an oppressive government and decided, "that as our trust was in God and that we looked to him for protection, we would not sign any such unjust and oppressive agreement." Even without signing the agreement, both the land and sea groups left the United States for their new home in the West without molestation.

The voyage to California was as uneventful as a voyage around the Horn could be in 1846. The cramped quarters, sickness, death, storms, and lack of provisions were part of the life. Ten passengers died during the journey, and two were born. A boy born before rounding the Horn was named Atlantic, while a girl born after the passage around it was

18 Ibid, 591, 544.

19 In a newspaper interview in 1888 Brannan told a fantastic story. He claimed that just before he left New York he was stopped by the Mexican consul and had to make a quick trip to Washington. He said he awoke President Polk who called an emergency cabinet meeting at 2 A. M. and then sent Commodore Stockton and the USS Constitution around the horn to protect the Brooklyn. "A Strange Career," Sacramento Bee, January 21, 1888. Brannan did make a trip to Washington to try to get a mail contract for a ship he was trying to charter, but the other details are highly unlikely to say the least.
named Pacific. The passengers were only too willing to stop at the Juan Fernandez and Sandwich Islands for supplies. Daily activities aboard the ship were tightly scheduled. Twenty-one rules were enacted before sailing. They provided for "reveille" at six A. M. and set rules for eating, health, religious services, personal conduct, and time to retire. The major internal problem of the group concerned polygamy. Some of the passangers had heard of the doctrine and were trying to expound and practice it. Brannan excommunicated four of the most active advocates charging them with "wicked and licentious conduct."

While the Brooklyn was at sea war was declared between the United States and Mexico. Rumors of the conflict reached the Saints in the Sandwich Islands and they wondered what reception they would be given in California—a Mexican possession. Their anticipation and excitement were resolved when they arrived at San Francisco Bay and found the flag of the United States flying—the city had been taken about three weeks before their arrival. The two hundred and thirty Mormons who landed at Yerba Buena almost doubled the population of the town. Some of the company, under Brannan's direction, soon

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20 One of the best accounts of the voyage appeared in *The Friend*, a Hawaiian publication printed during their brief stay on the island. *The Friend* (Honolulu), July 1, 1846.


23 For details of the voyage see: H. H. Bancroft, *History of California* (San Francisco: The History Company,
established a colony on the Stanislaus River, and named it New Hope because of their new hope in a new land. Brannan himself stayed in the Bay area and started San Francisco's first newspaper, The California Star, using the press, paper, type and ink brought with him on the Brooklyn.

III. MEETING WITH BRIGHAM YOUNG

The trip by water, although taking almost six months, proved to be much quicker than the overland journey. The overland group of Mormons decided not to make the trip in one summer and set up winter quarters on the Missouri. Early the next spring an advanced group left to find a new home for the exiles. Brannan was anxious to make contact with the overland group and tell them of the advantages of settling in California.

Before Brannan started to find the group led by Brigham Young, he learned of their decision not to make the trip in one summer. Members of the Mormon Battalion, a group of Mormons who had joined the army to fight in the Mexican


War and marched to California, told him of the decision. He therefore waited in California during the winter but left with two companions early in the spring of 1847 to find the Saints. While crossing the Sierra Nevadas Brannan and his companions were among the first to see the camps in which the Donner party had spent the winter. A letter from Brigham Young was delivered at Fort Hall, and the group hurried to meet him. On the last day of June, 1847, Brannan met Brigham Young near the Green River. He told how the church was progressing in California and urged the body of the church to continue to California for its permanent home. After a little more than a week with this advanced company Brannan was asked to take a copy of Lansford Hastings' map of the route into Salt Lake Valley to the sick detachment of the Mormon Battalion who were following the advanced party. He traveled back to meet them, and then traveled with them to the Salt Lake Valley arriving three days after Brigham Young. Samuel Brannan again tried to convince the Saints to continue to California, but Brigham Young declined to follow him apparently feeling that an isolated place would be best for the church. They had been driven from one area after another, and now at last it appeared that they had found a place where they could form


their zion without outside interference. Young's decision proved to be a wise one. The effects of the gold rush on the church if they had gone to California would likely have been devastating. Brannan remained in the valley some time trying to convince Brigham Young to change his mind before he returned to California. While in the valley Brannan was rebaptised by Heber C. Kimball. Many of the members of the church felt a need to reaffirm their allegiance to the church and were rebaptised to demonstrate their devotion. Brannan also helped explore Salt Lake and Tooele Valleys before leaving.

Although Brannan continued his church affiliation for a few years, his activity became less and less until he was excommunicated in 1853 ostensibly because of his activities in the vigilance committee. The reasons for Brannan's disenchantment with the church have been variously interpreted. Part of the answer is probably found in the great wealth he later acquired. As he became more and more concerned with temporal things he became less and less concerned with spiritual things. However, there are two other reasons, both of which stem from his meeting with Brigham Young, which may have contributed. Brannan had seen

26 See "Samuel Brannan" in Early Church Information File, Genealogical Society Library, Salt Lake City, original found in record # re bap. 1808 p. 2.

the opportunities in California and those in the Great Salt Lake Valley. He apparently had made up his mind that California should be the gathering place for the Saints and could not accept Brigham Young's decision not to bring the church to California. Brannan reiterated this reason near the end of his life in a letter to Jesse C. Little:

With regard to Brigham I have nothing to say, but that he did not keep his word, and my trip into the mountains in '47 was for nothing, . . . He evidently showed himself a coward in not coming to San Francisco or here or some important point on this coast. Now he has ruined his whole organization. 28

The other incident had to do with polygamy. Brannan claimed that when he arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, "Kimball 29 asked me how many wives I had? I replied One and d—d hard work to support her." 30 Apparently after the trouble in New York and on the Brooklyn over polygamy Samuel Brannan could not accept the new doctrine and left Salt Lake disillusioned.

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28 Samuel Brannan to Jesse C. Little, February 6, 1888, original in the Brigham Young University Library collection of Brannan papers, hereafter referred to as Brannan letters.

29 Heber C. Kimball, early Mormon leader and counselor to Brigham Young.

30 Brannan to Little, April 16, 1885, Brannan papers.
CHAPTER II

CALIFORNIA AND MEXICO

When Brannan returned to California, he brought messages for the members of the Mormon Battalion who were still in California. They were instructed to remain there until the next spring. Brigham Young felt that because of his late arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, they could not find sufficient supplies for those already in the valley and the battalion members who would come. Therefore they were asked to stay in California, work, and bring what they could with them the next spring.

I. GOLD RUSH

The battalion members took jobs where they could be found throughout California. Some of them were hired by John Sutter to help develop lands near his fort. Several of these men were put to work building a saw mill on the south fork of the American River, and they were present when gold was discovered. Sutter and James Marshall tried to keep the find secret, but a discovery of this magnitude was hard to hide. Samuel Brannan was still leader of the church in California and was in authority over these men. He also had opened a small store at Sutter's Fort. He soon learned of the dis-
covery and did his part in removing the secrecy which had surrounded it. The traditional story of the announcement of the find has Samuel Brannan hurrying to San Francisco:

Rushing into San Francisco's Plaza he doffed his broadbrimmed black hat, and holding aloft a bottle of glittering particles in his left hand he bellowed in his great bull voice: GOLD! GOLD! GOLD! From the American River! The Gold Rush was born that instant.1

While most of the argonauts searched for the elusive metal, Sam Brannan mined the miners. He was lucky in having a store near the diggings, and he enlarged it several times as the rush increased. He was reported to have done a $150,000 a month business,2 which even at the inflated gold rush prices was still an impressive amount.

II. BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Brannan sold his store in 1849 and moved to San Francisco, where he was soon involved in other business activities. He opened Brannan and Osgood, a store which specialized in Chinese merchandise. He was also very active in real estate and land development. He did most of his business in San Francisco, but expanded into other areas when especially promising enterprises were available. With three others he purchased the estate of John Sutter Jr., and attempted to make a profit from the great tract. As a result of these enterprises he became wealthy and was soon hailed as


California's first millionaire.

New horizons opened for Brannan and new enterprises were entered. One of the most picturesque of these enterprises took place in Hawaii and is still surrounded with a great deal of mystery. In 1851, Brannan led a group of speculators to the island kingdom apparently to persuade the king to give them control of the island. The king was to be given a guaranteed wage and to be relieved of the problems of government. The government would be put in the hands of a group Brannan selected, but the king's ministers frustrated the plan by blocking Brannan's attempts to see the king. The project proved to be unsuccessful, although Brannan did purchase property in the islands before returning to the mainland.  

One of the projects Brannan undertook which proved to be of greatest historical significance was the transcontinental railroad. When a group of Sacramento businessmen met to organize the Central Pacific, Brannan invested in the venture. He paid twenty thousand dollars for two hundred shares of stock. The "big four" controlled the company during the building of the railroad, and Brannan felt that they cheated him. In 1870, after the completion of the transcontinental line, he sued the Central Pacific to get the dividends.

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he claimed his investment would entitle him to receive. An
out of court settlement was finally made in which the company
gave him two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.  

Brannan spent thousands in the development of Nampa Valley. He dreamed of establishing a resort to rival any in
the United States or Europe. Calistoga appeared to Brannan
to be the perfect spot. It offered a warm, dry climate with
natural hot springs and was close enough to San Francisco to
lure visitors from the bay city.

He built a resort at Calistoga, constructing a bath
house, cottages, a store, brewery, and helped promote a
railroad connecting the resort with San Francisco. On his
vast properties in the area he pioneered new agricultural
advances. He was one of the first to develop the wine indus-
try in the area, and imported grape plants from France. He
also brought in blooded merino sheep to stock his ranch. How-
ever, the resort was never the success Brannan had envisioned.
The multitudes from San Francisco did not come, and a disas-
trous fire burned much of the resort. Brannan was finally
forced to sell the properties at a loss and turn to other
ventures.

His business activities caused him to be a legend in
his own time. The projects he engaged in were very diverse.
In addition to the ones already mentioned, he attempted to

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4 Henry R. Wagner, "Edward Bosqui, Printer and Man of
Affairs," California Historical Society Quarterly, XXI
(December, 1942), pl 328.
promote steam navigation to Sacramento; he with several others built the first wharf in San Francisco, and he developed the first commercial bank in the area. He gained great wealth and was not afraid to risk it on new ventures. He was in a very real sense one of the builders of San Francisco.

III. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

But business activities did not monopolize Brannan's time. He was active in political and governmental affairs. He was a leader in the San Francisco vigilance movement. San Francisco in the early 1850's was a rough town. Thousands had been lured to California in search of easy riches, and as many of the new citizens found that fortunes were not made as easily as they had been told they looked for other ways of making money without working. Many of the new residents engaged in various unlawful pursuits. A few of the offenders were brought to trial, but most of them were released or given sentences others thought were too lenient. Sam Brannan was never a man to hesitate when he felt action was needed. The Vigilance Committee of 1851 was organized in his office, and he was elected its first president. His persuasive ability was a great asset in gaining local support for this successful movement to rid the city of the undesirable Sydney Ducks.\(^5\)

Brannan's other political activities were significant,

if not as colorful as his vigilance activities. He was on the first city council and worked for early acts helping public schools and the fire department. He was elected a state senator for California but resigned because of other interests. His Yankee heritage caused him to support actively the Republican cause. In 1860 he stumped the state for Abraham Lincoln and had the satisfaction of casting one of California's electoral votes for the Great Emancipator.

Chinese were imported into California to work in various projects, especially building the railroad. Many of the early Californians, including Brannan, were very anti-Chinese. He was extremely nationalistic and very anti-foreign. In 1875 he delivered an anti-Chinese harangue to a local San Francisco crowd. One of Brannan's letters illustrates how inclusive his anti-foreign feelings extended:

It priestcraft has to fall as sure as Mahometanism (sic) falls with all the colored (sic) race of the world. Civilization needs them no longer and by degrees they will disappear and machinery (sic) will be substituted in their place for labor, their day of usefulness is past and in 500 or a 1000 years from now there will be nothing but a white race on earth and isms will be no more. They are the inventive race of the world, and their inventions will be the means of annihilating in wars, all that are not needed, and room for.

Brannan was not noted for his temperance, and as the years passed he became possessed to a greater and greater extent by the "demon rum." Bancroft, who did not particularly

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6 "Citizens Independent Nominating Convention," Daily Alta California, August 11, 1875.

7 Brannan to Little, December 31, 1886, Brannan papers.
like Brannan, said:

For 20 years or more he was rarely sober after noon; and became as well known for his dissolute habits and drunken freaks as he had been for his wealth and ability. 8

Samuel Brannan and his wife became less and less compatible. Brannan had been occupied with business, and his wife had spent several years living in Europe. The liquor, whether cause or result of home conditions, did not help, and they finally decided they could live together no more. Ann Eliza filed for divorce, charging her husband with cruelty, adultery, and habitual drunkenness. She received the divorce with an award of one-half of Brannan's property. 9 Most of the assets were in land and investments, and required some change before the division took place. This division was another serious depletion of the vast fortune Brannan had once possessed.

IV. MEXICAN LANDS

During the period of the American Civil War, a French force invaded Mexico and installed an emperor—Maximilian. The agents of the "legitimate" Mexican government under Juarez searched for help to finance the war, and they turned to the United States. Brannan was contacted by the Mexican agents and agreed to help recruit a force and direct the issuing of some bonds. 10 The bonds were issued, but did not prove to


9 Newspaper clipping dated May 18, 1870, but the newspaper is not identified. California Historical Society's scrapbooks: Amelia Neville, Book #4, p. 28.

10 See Robert W. Frazer, "The Ochoa Bond Negotiations
be as successful as imagined. In payment for his help Brannan received a large number of bonds. The second section of this thesis will examine these bonds and their effect on Brannan's life in greater detail.

Samuel Brannan's personal fortunes declined as investment after investment did not materialize. The divorce took one-half of his property, and disasters like the fire at Calistoga claimed additional revenue. Brannan became less and less wealthy until he actually needed to look for additional sources of income. The Mexican government had been paying on the debt they owed Brannan, and redeeming the bonds from him, but by the late 1870's they had not completely redeemed them. Brannan saw in the debt a chance to start a new wave of speculation. He decided to ask the Mexican government for land rather than money in the belief that he could receive a great deal more in actual value from the land. He went to Mexico City, and after much effort was awarded a large grant in Northern Sonora.

With the energy that had developed much in California, he organized companies and laid plans for new colonies. However, the grant was given conditionally. Brannan must survey the lands and start the survey within three months. The surveying was not started within the time allotted, and the land reverted back to the Mexican government.

Brannan did not despair, but started working for a second grant and after a great deal of effort was given such a concession. Again plans were laid, and men hired to do the work, but again the requirements were not met, and the land returned to the government. The reason was that Brannan first had a stroke which paralyzed one side of his body and then had yellow fever. Even Brannan's persistence and desire could not overcome these obstacles.

Brannan moved to Nogales, Arizona, and worked for still another grant. After much waiting, a third grant was given. This grant was different than the others. A specific grant was given to Brannan, but he was also given the right to survey most of the unoccupied land in Sonora for one-third of the land surveyed. Brannan sought help in the endeavor, and soon a Chicago based company was organized to do the surveying for the land. The survey took a long time to complete, and much of Brannan's time was spent in connection with it. Brannan moved to Escondido, just outside San Diego, California and waited for the final division of the land with the company. He bought a farm, and looked into many business opportunities in the area and waited for some new word from Mexico, or from the company, or from some one interested in his portion of the Mexican lands. He was still waiting in 1889 when he died in Escondido. His seventy years had seen tremendous development in the American West, and he had been involved in much of it.
PART II.

MEXICAN LANDS
CHAPTER III
THE MEXICAN BONDS

I. FRENCH INTERVENTION IN MEXICO

Events were taking place in Mexico which would change Brannan's life. A short review of the history of Mexico will help clarify his involvement. The history of Mexico in the nineteenth century was filled with turbulence. The citizens fought for many years to achieve independence from Spain, and after it had been achieved, there ensued a long struggle for political control of the country. Leader after leader was disposed as his attempt at consolidation failed. Benito Juarez, a full blooded Zapotec Indian, became leader of the nation in 1858 and felt that to insure the goals of the revolution, a new reform must be enacted. He decided that the power and wealth of the church must be broken, and its land holdings distributed to the Mexican people. The civil war which followed was tremendously destructive to Mexico, and even though Juarez was able to consolidate his control over Mexico, it was a weakened nation he led.

Among the austerity measures Juarez enacted was one suspending payments on Mexico's foreign debts. The major European countries had backed Juarez' opposition in the civil war and were very displeased with this suspension. Feeling
that mismanagement was one of the principal reasons for this moratorium, they felt that if they could control Mexican finances, they could manage them with enough profits to meet the needs of the Mexican government and still supply the needed cash for the discontinued payments. To achieve this end, England, France and Spain met in London and signed the Tripartite Convention of London in October 1861.

The three powers sent a joint military expedition to Mexico, and the Custom's house at Vera Cruz was soon under their control. Dissention quickly grew among the allies after the victory. It became evident that France was seeking more than the other two partners. Napoleon III, Emperor of France, was faced with ebbing popularity at home. He felt that a spectacular success in foreign affairs would bolster his image at home. The Mexican situation seemed ideal. It would allow the French Monarch to re-establish a French empire, and by installing a leader who would restore the church's power and lands he would gain the gratitude and support of the French Catholics. Spain and England quickly lost interest in the adventure as Napoleon's plans became more evident, withdrawing their support and troops from the enterprise.¹

The French troops, now freed from the limitations of their allies, pressed forward into Mexico. By June, 1863, they had captured the capital city and were determined to

solidify their control of the country. Since outright annexation to France did not appear to be the best solution, Napoleon searched for someone for the leadership of Mexico that he could control. The choice fell upon Archduke Maximilian of Austria. With Napoleon's blessings, a group of Mexican conservatives offered the crown to him. The Hapsburg Prince agreed to assume the reigns of government only if the Mexican people were united in their approval of the move. To demonstrate the feelings of the people, a carefully controlled plebiscitewas held in Mexico. A large majority of those questioned wanted the Austrian for their king. He accepted the offer, sailed to America, and assumed the reins of power in Mexico.

The foreign king and the French army brought more and more of the country under their control, until by 1864 only the northernmost states were still controlled by the Juarez government. The situation for this "legitimate" government was becoming increasingly desperate. It was well supplied with men to fight but lacked the necessary supplies and weapons of war or the means to purchase them. Lack of finances had precipitated the European intervention, and threatened to allow the French to conquer the whole nation.

The wealth of the nation was utilized in the struggle but it was not enough. Clearly new sources of backing must be tapped. It was a great deal easier to speculate about prospective places of support than to find them. Spain and England, the European countries that were the most likely to
help, were reluctant because of their former ties with France. Many South American countries presented letters of friendship and support but did not provide the cash necessary to carry on the struggle.

II. THE OCHOA MISSION

Mexico's northern neighbor was a logical and yet an illogical place to seek the help. The Mexican War had occurred less than twenty years before, and the Mexicans were very wary of the nation which had taken so much of their land. However, the United States was rich, and Maximilian's invasion was clearly a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. The "Colossus of the North" had not exerted pressure earlier because of the civil war which was raging within her borders. The war seemed to limit official backing until this internal problem was settled.2

If help could not be expected from the central government, could an appeal be made to individuals within the United States? President Juarez, relying upon reports which reached him, thought so and decided to send a special mission to the north. Leadership of the group was given to General Gaspar Sanchez Ochoa, commander of the Pacific Military Department and a former governor of Zacatecas. He was sent to

2Even though the United States could not actively oppose the French intervention because of her own Civil War, Congress did pass a resolution against it. Early in 1864 the House of Representatives passed a resolution saying that it was not in the policy of the United States government, "to acknowledge any monarchical government erected on the ruins of any republican government . . . under the auspices of any European power." Congressional Globe, 38 Congress, 1 session, p. 1408.
San Francisco with instructions to secure men and materials for the Mexican cause. Ochoa was to appeal for financial contributions. He was also authorized to accept into service any Americans who were willing to fight in the Mexican armies, and purchase supplies and munitions for the armies in the field. To help defray the costs, he was authorized to issue bonds which the national government would back with the custom receipts at Guaymas, Manzanillo and Mazathan.³

Ochoa was fortunate because his Chief of Staff, Colonel George M. Green, was an American who would certainly give the Latin a great deal of help in his appeal to the Californians. Green contacted his brother, Alfred, a Californian, who agreed to help in the money raising. Alfred Green introduced the Mexican general to Samuel Brannan, who was then one of the leading merchants on the Pacific Coast.⁴ Brannan's reputation as a financier made him an excellent choice for such an appeal. Brannan agreed to help Ochoa in issuing the bonds and recruiting the men.


⁴A newspaper account written in 1880 claimed that Brannan was returning to California aboard a Pacific Mail Steamer in the Spring of 1865. Juarez and Ochoa were also passengers, and a friendship between Juarez and Brannan supposedly formed the basis for Brannan's later gifts to the Mexican nation. "Brannan's Bonanza," New York Times, February 3, 1880.
III. LEGION OF HONOR

Ochoa was successful in organizing a military unit in California known as the American Legion of Honor. It was commissioned by the President of Mexico and fought in several important battles including the fall of Querataro, the capture and execution of Maximilian, and the triumphant entrance of Juarez into Mexico City. Brannan provided equipment for the legion, including complete uniforms, thirty-five saddle horses, sabers, Henry repeating rifles, Colt pistols, 16,500 rounds of ammunition, two wagons, and a supply of drugs and medical equipment. His help was great enough that some newspapers called the group the "Brannan Contingent."

IV. THE MEXICAN BONDS

Even though Brannan rendered a great deal of help with the organizing and equipping of Ochoa's military force, his major efforts were aimed at helping the Mexicans issue bonds. The California financier agreed to prepare the whole issue for sale including paying all costs incurred in printing and advertising. He was to direct all of the details in the appeal to the Americans. In return for his efforts, he was to be named general agent for the bonds and receive a commis-


6Samuel Brannan V. Mexico, National Archives, Record Group 76, document 562.

sion of one per-cent on their sale. Under this agreement, ten million dollars worth of bonds were printed and advertised widely. Brannan appears to have had a dual motive in his support of Mexico. He did help because of a desire to see their cause triumph, but perhaps a more important motive was to gain a profit on his investment. The agreement he signed was a favorable one for Brannan, and later when the bonds did not sell, Brannan was very reluctant to lose any money in the venture.

Even Samuel Brannan's backing did not sell the bonds. Most investors were unwilling to risk investments to a government that might be defeated before the bonds became due. The agents tried vainly to sell them before admitting defeat. Finally General Ochoa became convinced that greener pastures awaited him and the bonds in the New York market and prepared to go there. Before he left Brannan wanted some assurance that he would be paid the money he had invested. An agreement made between the two men called for payment to the Californian within sixty days. If the debt were paid in gold it would amount to $30,000, but if paid in "legal tender notes" it would increase to $43,478. Ochoa agreed to pay one-half per-cent on either amount. Brannan asked for and received even greater backing—-if the debt were not paid within the sixty days, the entire ten million dollar bond issue would revert to Brannan, who could sell them on the open market or hold them until the debt was paid.  

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8 U. S. House Executive Documents, 40th congress, 1 session, Executive Document No. 33, (Serial #1311), pp. 228-230.
Mexican General left for New York.

The attempt to market the bonds in the Eastern market proved to be even less successful than the efforts in California. When General Ochoa arrived he found that another Mexican agent was already there. General Jose Maria de Jesus Carvajal had been sent by the Juarez government to the Atlantic Coast with instructions similar to those given to Ochoa. Carvajal was in the process of preparing bonds for the American market, and had signed an agreement with his backers that no other Mexican bonds would be sold on the East coast. General Ochoa did not want to disrupt the negotiations, so he placed the California bonds in a bank vault and awaited developments. If these new bonds proved successful Brannan would be paid from their profits.

Just as buyers had been unwilling in California to risk such an investment, so were eastern investors. The Mexican agents searched for a way to make the bonds more attractive to Americans, and the best solution seemed to be having the United States government back them. Various attempts were made to gain this backing, but all proved unsuccessful. Since Ochoa was not needed in the bond issue, he decided to try to gain this official United States support.

He made several attempts, but they were not successful and he was about to return to Mexico when he met John C. Fremont. After resigning from the Union army, Fremont had turned his attentions to building railroads in the southwest. He was particularly interested in the Memphis, El Paso and
Pacific line. Fremont saw in the plight of the general a way to gain Mexican approval for another branch for the railroad. A branch into the Mexican port of Guaymas would provide the line with another Pacific port and draw the commerce and trade of Mexico to it. Fremont told Ochoa that he had enough influence with Congress to obtain the official backing for the bonds. In return for his efforts he would require certain concessions from the Mexicans. The Mexican general and Fremont signed an agreement in which the American agreed to conduct an advertising campaign to win approval for the bonds. Mexico was to give Fremont not only the railroad concession, but to relinquish import duties and taxes. In addition he would be given land grants to help build the railroad, and up to six million dollars in the California bonds to finance the appeal to the United States Government.

General Ochoa had greatly exceeded his instructions when he signed the agreement with Fremont. When Ochoa came to the East he was instructed to clear all his actions with Matias Romero, the Mexican Minister in Washington. When word reached the Mexican government that Ochoa had "hypothacised" the entire bond issue to Samuel Brannan for a thirty thousand dollar debt it showed its displeasure by ending his commission but allowing him to stay in the United States to clear up the trouble he had caused. The Mexican general not only did not clear up the trouble with Brannan, but signed the unauthorized agreement with Fremont. Granting a railroad concession was something that only the national government could legally do,
and when Romero learned of the new agreement he refused to approve the document. He said that a railroad concession might be granted, but not on the terms outlined by Ochoa. Romero met with Fremont several times, but they were never able to agree on terms.

By the summer of 1866 things appeared bleak for the Mexican agents in the United States. Not only had the bonds not sold, but United States backing had not been obtained and the sixty days had long since passed; Brannan was demanding his money, and Fremont was claiming that the agreement he signed with General Ochoa was legally binding upon Mexico. The Mexicans decided to consult a lawyer, and their choice fell upon Caleb Cushing, who had been America's first minister to China. After examining the claims Cushing said that Ochoa had exceeded his instructions and the agreement with Fremont was not binding upon the Mexican government. On the other hand, even though Ochoa may have exceeded his instructions in his agreement with Brannan, Cushing said that the Californian's was a just debt, and that arrangements should be made to pay him.

Brannan sent Peter H. Burnett, who had been the first governor of California and was now President of the Pacific Bank, as his representative to the East. Brannan instructed Burnett to make some arrangements for payment of the money owed, or to sell the bonds on the open market. A threat was made to auction the bonds to the highest bidder, but it proved to be unnecessary. Burnett met with Romero and told him
that, "Mr. Brannan wants this matter arranged very much. The incumbrances render it necessary to have this debt paid." 9

The two men were able to agree on a solution—Brannan would retain custody of the bonds but would not sell them. The Mexicans would be allowed to redeem all or part of them by paying what they owed Brannan. The bonds would continue to draw interest at the rate of one and one-half per-cent a month until they were redeemed.

The Mexican government was still having financial problems but worked at reducing the debt. In May, 1867 it paid Brannan $8,447 and redeemed three-twentieths, or one and one-half million dollars worth of the bonds. 10 The interest had raised the total debt from $48,478 to $57,508. The government continued to pay Brannan for the bonds until by 1878 they could claim that only $500,000 of the bonds were not yet redeemed. 11

Brannan sought money from the Mexicans in another way. A claims commission was held between the United States and her southern neighbor in 1876. All claims by individuals or groups against Mexico were submitted and judged by an "impartial judge.‖ Samuel Brannan entered a claim of $19,376 for "services

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10 Ibid, p. 249.

and pecuniary advances as recruiting agent in California.\textsuperscript{12} It appears that this claim, which was examined and dismissed, arose from Brannan's activities in helping the American Legion of Honor, and not from his work with the bonds. As Brannan felt a greater need for money he tried to obtain compensation for earlier favors. If Brannan did help the Mexicans because of a sympathy for their cause he later sought to regain the aid.

\textsuperscript{12}'Schedule of American Claims Against the Mexican Republic,' Senate Executive Documents, 44th Congress, 2nd Session, Document number 31 (Serial #1720), pp. 44-45.
CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST AND SECOND LAND GRANTS

Much of Brannan's fortune had been made speculating in real estate, and he knew the value of undeveloped land. As his personal fortune needed an addition, and it appeared that Mexico might take some time in paying the money owed him, Brannan decided to ask for land rather than money. Cash would provide an immediate gain, but the possibilities in the land development seemed even more alluring.

Little has been found about Brannan's activities in seeking Mexican land before late 1879. It appears that he had some assurance that he would be able to obtain land, and may have visited Mexico City or had a representative talk to the Mexican leaders.

I. COLONIZATION ACTIVITIES

Apparently with some assurance that he could gain a land grant from Mexico, he set about organizing various companies to direct the development. Although Brannan did not assume official leadership of the groups, he was still the directing force behind them. Two parent companies were organized—the Sonora Colonization Association of California, and the "auxiliary, but independent"Sonora Colonization Association of New York. The first was founded in California,
with Dr. Ord as President. They advertised widely offering free memberships, and by late 1879 claimed to have one thousand two hundred and fifty seven members, each the head of a family, and each ready to leave for Mexico.  

The second company came about almost by accident—Brannan returned to his home state of Maine for a visit, and while there was persuaded that a similar organization should be made for the east coast. The Sonora Colonization Association of New York was organized in January, 1880, with the stated purpose of establishing in Sonora:

a colony, composed of agriculturists, miners, mechanics, artists, merchants, capitalists, professional and business men of every branch of industry, commerce and art in conformity to the laws that now exist, or may hereafter exist in the said state.

A full organization was outlined and elected. Edward C. Kemble was president of the group. He had come with Brannan to California on the Brooklyn, had purchased the California Star from Brannan, and had become one of the leading journalists of early California. By 1880 Kemble had returned to New York and was ready to join Brannan's new colonization effort.

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1 Brannan to Little, July 27, 1880, Brannan papers.
William H. A. Brown, a Chicago businessman, was the treasurer. Brown played an important role in Brannan's later land grants. The corresponding secretary was C. Edward Lester, an author who had written *Mexico Republic*, *Glory and Shame of England*, and *America's Advancement*. Brannan took the job of general agent with unspecified duties. All of these men were members of the ten man board of directors which also included George B. Ripley, a California friend of Brannan, and five other men. They opened an office in a basement on Broadway in New York and sent out circulars.5

Samuel Brannan was not slow in offering old friends a part in the new enterprise, especially if the arrangements could be mutually helpful. Brannan soon contacted an old Mormon acquaintance, Jesse C. Little. The New York Company was organized in January and by early February Little was an official agent for the group with the assignment of securing settlers. Later in February Little was issued the first twenty of twenty-five thousand certificates of membership. Each certificate entitled the holder to one hundred and fifty acres of land in the colony. In addition it provided for seventy-five acres for his wife, fifty acres for each child, and one city lot in the proposed City of Hidalgo.6 No indication is given as to whether Little purchased the shares or they were given to him for his services to the company.

5Ibid.

6Certificate of Membership of the Sonora Colonization Association of New York. Twenty original certificates in the Brigham Young University Library.
II. HIDALGO CITY COMPANY

The third company Brannan organized was the Hidalgo City Company, organized on the fifteenth of January, 1880, two weeks after the Sonora Colonization Company of New York. The company was incorporated with a capital stock of $2,500,000 to be issued in two hundred and fifty thousand shares costing ten dollars each. The company was to promote a city which would be located near the Yaqui and Verde Rivers. Brannan claimed that the title to the three square miles on which the city would be located was "absolutely unquestionable," even though he did not in fact have any title to it yet. The streets would run at right angles northeast and southwest, "so that the sun will reach all parts of the city in his western course." The city was to have parks, schools, churches, water supply, and gas works. The officers in the new company were the same as those of the Sonora Colonization Association of New York, except that they held different positions. Samuel Brannan was vice president of this company. 7

Brannan was not only interested in colonizing and city building but also wanted a chance to build a railroad. He applied to Mexico for authorization to build such a road to the projected city, and a circular issued by the company in early February said that a company was being formed to build

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7 Prospectus and By-Laws of the Hidalgo City Co. (New York: J. J. Bloomfield, 1880).
a railroad from Hidalgo City to the Guaymas road. Until it was finished, a list of routes and costs were published, with a note that the company was making arrangements for stage transportation from Tucson to the grant.  

The California Pioneer was very careful to assure that the colonization plans were not to be construed as filibustering expeditions into Mexico, but groups of settlers going to Mexico for permanent homes and determined to become good Mexican citizens. In January, 1880, he wrote a letter to the New York Herald explaining this position. It was later reprinted in Spanish and English and used as a tract. The message stated:

Our people start for Sonora, not as raiders, adventurers or speculators. We are acting in strict conformity with the laws and guarantees of both governments, and with vested rights which we deem secure.  

Any attempt at ultimate annexation of the area to the United States was disclaimed, and it was stated that the United States had enough land without annexating any "foreign peoples." Brannan said that a large number of the people going to Mexico had been citizens of Mexican California. He then listed the reasons why "well-to-do men in the far west" wanted to join the enterprise. First, he stated that the mining code of the United States was favorable to capital and not to labor. Labor often was not given its share of the proceeds. The Mexican mining code was in many respects, "far

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8 The Sonora Colonization Enterprise, p. 3.
9 Samuel Brannan, Sonora Colonization, (New York: n.n. 1880)
more just and liberal." It allowed the man finding the mine to be assured that he would not lose the money and effort expended in the mining venture. The second reason Brannan mentioned was the Chinese problem. The introduction of Chinese labor had depressed the labor market in California and was a "mad and suicidal attempt to degrade labor and insult manhood." Many of those joining the enterprise were laborers fleeing this situation.

Edward Lester, perhaps in his position as corresponding secretary for the New York group, also answered the filibustering charge. Two letters he wrote to the State Democrat in Saco, Maine were also reprinted and used as a pamphlet for the company. Lester said that the day of filibustering was finished. It had been inseparably connected with the extension of slavery, and now that slavery was abolished so was the attempt to extend the United States by filibustering. He said that there was a great expanse of unsettled land in our nation and that the acquisition of additional land was unnecessary for this purpose. A reiteration was made of the problems resulting from the mining code of the United States, which he categorized as the worst in the world, and said that Mexico's was the best. He concluded one letter by saying that those "well informed on the subject regard the prospects of this great company as the most encouraging of any similar movement ever made on this continent."  

\[10\] Ibid.  
\[11\] Lester.
III. ACTIVITIES IN MEXICO

Perhaps the major reason the officials of the colonization groups were so concerned with disclaiming any dishonorable aims was the fact that a land grant had not been given to Brannan, and any hint of filibustering would damage the chances of getting such a grant. Filibustering was not in reality as dead as Brannan wanted the Mexican government to believe. Brannan apparently visited Mexico in 1879, perhaps gaining an assurance that the grant would be made. The New York Times in February 1880 carried an article saying that Brannan had received a large grant of land, but this proved to be rumor and not fact. Brannan apparently decided that if a grant was to be made he would need to appeal directly to officials in Mexico City, and so in February, 1880, shortly after organizing the eastern branches of the company he left for the Mexican capital.

Brannan lived in the Mexican capital for almost a year seeking a grant. He appealed to President Diaz and was able to talk with him personally. Diaz told Brannan that the nation wanted to pay him, but that it was poor. The Californian replied that he knew their situation and was seeking for land rather than cash. Brannan was assured that he would be taken care of by the government. However, before any grant could be made, an election took place in Mexico and both parties

were reluctant to make a grant until after the election.

Brannan used various lobbying methods. One of the most interesting was a dinner he gave for representatives of the American and Mexican press. Brannan, who knew the help a friendly press could provide, invited them to the Tivoli del Elisea for a dinner to celebrate the fourth of July. While working for the grant Brannan wrote to various individuals. He wrote to Jesse C. Little in June and again in July, 1880. Little was informed that the appeal was progressing slowly, but satisfactorily. He was told about the new problems brought about by the elections and found that the claims were now pending. There were three claims and each of them must go through the departments separately. Brannan also informed Little that there were three hundred miners in Virginia City who were ready to come when the claim was approved.

IV. THE FIRST LAND GRANT

After President Manuel Gonzales and the new congress took office, Brannan presented his claim. Money was finally voted for the Californian, but he claimed he told them, "If you don't give me land I don't want anything." The

13 San Jose Pioneer, August 28, 1880.
14 Brannan to Little, June 14, 1880 and July 27, 1880, Brannan Papers.
15 "The Sam Brannan Banquet," Daily Alta California (San Francisco), June 1, 1881.
Mexicans finally gave Brannan a land grant. He later claimed that there were some of his friends in the new cabinet and that they helped push the grant through. The Secretary of State was singled out as supporting the grant, although he was not identified as the "friend" in the cabinet. Brannan claimed that they allowed him to set his own terms and gave him a railroad grant in addition to the land grant.\(^16\)

It is difficult to determine if Brannan was given any money by the Mexicans at this time, or if he received only land. Eight years after the grant, The San Francisco Examiner said that Mexico had voted to give the Californian one hundred thousand dollars and a grant of land and that twenty-five thousand dollars had been given to him in 1880.\(^17\) The report is probably exaggerated and would be heavily discredited if there was not additional evidence that he received some money.

Alexander Badlam, Brannan's nephew, served as his business agent in San Francisco. He kept a record of money spent and received in behalf of his uncle. An entry is made for August 3, 1880 for a "Draft Mexico from S. Brannan Guaymas, $6,902.57."\(^18\) No explanation is given for the entry, which may or may not represent a payment from the Mexican government on the bond debt.

\(^{16}\)Ibid.

\(^{17}\)"Sam Brannan, The Adventurous Life of a noted Californian," San Francisco Examiner, January 15, 1888.

\(^{18}\)Alexander Badlam's Account Book, August 3, 1880. A Photostatic copy of part of this book together with copies of letters between Samuel Brannan and Alexander Badlam are located in the California State Library, Sacramento and will hereafter be referred to as: Badlam papers.
Determining the exact size of the grant is another elusive problem. The New York Times claimed that it was fifteen hundred leagues of land in Sonora. The Deseret News said that the grant was made for eighty-four square leagues. Perhaps the most accurate report was contained in a company pamphlet which claimed the grant was forty-two leagues. It appears that the grant was not made directly to Brannan, but to General Manuel Castro, who had been a Mexican military leader in California during the Mexican War, with the understanding that it was to be turned over to Brannan when title was given.

The lands were to be distributed to actual settlers on attractive terms. Settlers were each to be given either a farm of one-hundred acres or a town lot free of charge. They would be charged only for the cost of the survey and deed to their land. The company would make money by keeping the alternate lots and farms and selling them to new settlers after the price had increased.

The land was described as lying in the central part of Sonora, between the headwaters of the Yaqui and Mayo Rivers.

20 "The Brannan Lands in Sonora," The Deseret Evening News (Salt Lake City), June 8, 1881.
22 "Editorial Notes," Daily Alta California (San Francisco), August 10, 1881.
23 Brannan, p. 1.
It was about two hundred and fifty miles east of Guaymas and four hundred miles south of Tucson, Arizona. It had "some of the most fertile agricultural lands and richest mining fields in the State of Sonora." The elevation was from two to four thousand feet, and the land was described as rolling "vallies" (sic) and hills with abundant game and fish. The weather was almost ideal, and violent storms "entirely unknown." In addition to the rich agricultural products such as coffee, wheat, corn, all semi-tropical products, and fruits, there were rich coal fields just waiting for someone to mine them.  

Mexico placed conditions upon the grant. The land must be surveyed, and the survey must begin within three months. In addition, Brannan must bring a certain number of settlers into the vacant acres. The Alta California claimed that he was required to bring five hundred settlers to the tract. The New York Times reported that the grant was fifteen hundred leagues, "on which to colonize one thousand families." Since the size of the grant is exaggerated, the one thousand families is probably not the condition Brannan had to meet.  

The press reaction to the grant was varied. The Alta California ended its description of the grant with the comment that, "if Sam manages well he may yet fully retrieve

\[24\] Ibid.
\[25\] "Sam Brannan's Land Grant," Daily Alta California, (San Francisco), July 21, 1881, and Salt Lake Herald, July 29, 1881.
\[26\] Daily Alta California (San Francisco), July 29, 1885, see also, New York Times, April 23, 1881.
his fortune. May he do so."28 A long article about the grant appeared in the Deseret News, but ended with the caution:

Promises are easy, talk is cheap, and those who have land which can only be made valuable by an influx of settlers, are apt to draw pictures and plans which look far brighter on paper and parchment than they appear in nature and on the actual spot.29

After receiving the grant, Brannan was kept busy with the final details which needed his attention. He was in New York in April 1881, and while there a dinner was given in his honor. Members of the New York branch of the company were the main guests. The newspaper accounts gave short histories of Brannan and the land grant and said that the colonizer would start for Mexico with his party of colonists in a few days. The group attending the dinner were described as a "jolly company of gentlemen" who were old Californians or interested in Mexican railroads. The proceedings will have to be imagined, but toast after toast was offered, and the company "did not separate until a late hour."30

A transportation revolution had certainly taken place during Brannan's life, because a week after this banquet in New York he was in San Francisco. Perhaps Brannan compared that week with the six months his first trip between the two

28"Sam Brannan Kedivivus," Daily Alta California, (San Francisco), March 25, 1881.

29"The Brannan Lands in Sonora," Deseret Evening News, (Salt Lake City), June 8, 1881.

points had required. In San Francisco another banquet was held in his honor—this one in the Palace Hotel in the bay city. After several speeches in his honor, Brannan made a response in which he recounted his trip to Mexico and the final granting of the land. Brannan mentioned that it was given conditionally, but foresaw no difficulty in complying with the conditions, and said that after they were completed he was entitled to another forty league tract. He said that the desired settlers were not Europeans, but people from the western United States, and added that those in San Francisco wanted an outlet for their young men, especially those "that otherwise would go to the penitentiary, the gallows or the high sea."  

Brannan mentioned the colony's need for a sawmill, a tannery, a flour mill, blacksmiths, and "kindred tradesmen." The man being honored also spoke about the Yaqui Indians, who occupied the land grant. He said that they were "peacefully inclined and that no fear was to be apprehended of danger in that direction." Again various toasts were made, and one of the responses was made by a former Mormon, T. B. H. Stenhouse, who toasted "The Colonization Project."  

While Brannan was in San Francisco, he was interviewed about the project. He said that he was going to leave for Mexico as soon as possible, and that a surveying party had left the City of Mexico for Sonora. Another party would be

31 "The Sam Brannan Banquet," Daily Alta California, (San Francisco), June 1, 1881.
32 Ibid.
sent out from Tucson in two or three weeks. Brannan had been planning these surveying parties for a long time, and as early as October, 1880, Badlam's accounts show that Brannan was having surveying equipment repaired and made ready.

Several companies can publicise a venture and create enthusiasm but are less suited for directing activities, and so Brannan organized a joint company to oversee the colonizing. It was called the Sonora Land and Mining Company and Colonizing Association and had offices in San Francisco and New York. Tracts were printed describing the grant and praising its fertility and climate. They claimed that all the personal belongings of the colonists would pass the customs house free. Routes and prices for reaching the area were given, with the promise that the company was making arrangements to establish a stage route from Tucson to the Sonora grant.

The proposed plans were never completed because the survey was not started within the allotted time. The first hint of trouble came in the middle of July, when the Alta reported first that Brannan had been paid $10,000 by the Mexicans and was returning to San Francisco and then in the same article included a later bulletin. Problems had arisen, the article said, over the validity of the claim and also

33 “Brannan's Mexican Colony,” Daily Alta California, (San Francisco), May 30, 1881.
34 Alexander Badlam's Account book, September 28, 1880 and October 6, 1880, Badlam papers.
over the failure to start the survey within the time allowed. Plans had been made for survey teams, but they had not started the survey. One report said that the Yaqui Indians were in open rebellion, and another said that it would require a small army to survey or subdivide the land. However, whether because of an Indian revolt, procrastination or other obstacle, the land was not surveyed within the allotted time and so reverted to the Mexican government. A dispatch in early August gave the final word:

Sam Brannan's grant is now dead, without hope of resurrection. It is not probable that Brannan will secure another grant in lieu of this lapsed one.

This gloomy forecast would certainly come true unless Brannan expended a great deal of effort. During the fall of 1881 he found another reason to expend this effort for another grant. He took a mule trip into the backwoods of Sonora with two companions. The journey took almost two months, but convinced Brannan that he had located some very valuable silver mines. These mines would justify the trouble of getting another grant from Mexico.

Brannan later told the story to Jesse C. Little. The Spanish had discovered and developed several rich silver mines in northern Mexico, which were reported to be the richest in

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36 "Sam Brannan's Land Grant," Daily Alta California (San Francisco), July 21, 1881.
37 Salt Lake Herald, July 29, 1881.
38 "Editorial Notes," Daily Alta California (San Francisco), August 10, 1881.
39 Ibid.
the world. An Apache uprising in 1820 had driven the Europeans from the area, and there had been no chance to return until the region had been taken from the Indians the year before. These mines had been discovered by Maximilian and his army when they moved into Sonora, but they were unable to develop them before their capture by the Juarez forces. The location of the mines was again lost, but an engineer in Maximilian's army had drawn a map of them. This map was finally deposited in a church in Sonora where Brannan found it. The trek Brannan made by mule was to check the map, which he did without letting his companions know what he was doing. Brannan had now found the mines and he wanted them greatly. A San Francisco newspaper printed a letter written by Brannan after the journey. It told optimistically about the trip, but not the purpose for it, and ended with the declaration that, "there are worse Indians in San Francisco than in Sonora."  

V. GUAYMAS

Brannan took up residence in Guaymas and tried for another grant. All of his energies could not be directed toward appeals to the government because he had to make a living. In 1882 he was reported to be in business with Colonel John Rickertson, who was a friend from California. They were surveying a railroad from the Atchison, Topeka

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40 Brannan to Little, February 5, 1885, and February 11, 1885, Brannan papers.

41 "Letter from Sam Brannan," Daily Alta California (San Francisco), October 11, 1881.
and Sante Fe in the United States to the Mexican port of Guaymas. 42

The activities Brannan engaged in while waiting for the appeals to be approved are as illustrative of his character and disposition as any can be. Brannan was a man who liked to be involved. He had a quick and inventive mind which was constantly seeking new projects to develop. He was anything but timid when it came to espousing new products or developments. He usually jumped "full steam" into a project and then continued it or dropped it as the fancy of the public was caught or missed. He wrote about and discussed a large number of projects, looked into a few, and became completely immersed in a small number. He was not afraid to gamble all on a development or idea, which is one of the reasons he lost his fortune. He could be doggedly persistent if he felt he was onto something big, as evidenced by his determination in the Mexican lands.

The range and diversity of the projects he inquired about is illustrated in the letters he sent his nephew from Guaymas. Alexander Badlam was still acting as his business agent, supplying him with articles he could not obtain in Mexico, conducting business for him in San Francisco, and serving as consultant for an almost endless series of enterprises. Brannan wanted Badlam to see what a thirty-ton flat-bottom sloop would cost. The boat would be used to

navigate the Yaqui River, taking supplies up the river and returning with bricks which the Indians would manufacture. The bricks would find a ready market in Guaymas, with its housing shortage, and the demand would increase when the railroad reached the port city. He told his nephew that he wanted the agency for "Wrigley's portable houses," in another move designed to anticipate the housing rush which would soon come to Guaymas. He asked for prices and directions for various styles and sizes of this early pre-fabricated housing chain. Another agency he sought was one for canned meats, fish, fruit, and vegetables. This was another agency whose products would find a ready market when the new railroad was completed. He wanted to know about a newly developed buggy which was specially made for desert travel and had two fifteen gallon water tanks attached under it. He asked Badlam to look into artesian well drilling and try to find someone to come to Guaymas to drill them. He was sure such a business would succeed and offered a driller one-half interest in the business with Brannan paying half the expenses.43

All of Brannan's activities were not dreams and inquiries. He bought three ranches in the vicinity. They were quite large containing three, four, and five leagues of land. One of these bordered the uncompleted railroad line, and Brannan hoped to make it a station. The prospects of its becoming a depot would be greatly increased by an artesian

43 Brannan to Badlam, August 18, 1882, and August 19, 1882, Badlam papers.
well, and this was one of the reasons he asked Badlam about a well driller.  

Business activities did not demand all of Brannan's time. California was still home, and he was far from it and his old friends. It was a lonely life, and so Samuel Brannan married again. The bride was a thirty-five year old widow named Carmelita Carmen de Llaguno. She was described as "handsome, intelligent, and wealthy." The Salt Lake Herald wondered how Brannan had won such a woman. A question is raised as to where the wedding took place. The most common story had Brannan and his bride going to Tucson, because he was not catholic and could not marry in Guaymas. However, a contemporary newsclipping sets the wedding in Guaymas.

VI. THE SECOND LAND GRANT

All the waiting in Mexico was not in vain. The Mexican government gave Brannan another grant of land, to be surveyed within six months. He wrote to Jesse Little telling of his plans. He was about to send a party to survey a damsite. The dam, he said, would provide irrigation for the

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Salt Lake Herald, April 9, 1882.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]


\[\text{Salt Lake Herald, April 9, 1882.}\]

\[\text{Brannan to Little, November 26, 1885, Brannan papers.}\]
City of Sonora which he planned to build. The plans for this city were similar to the former ones for the City of Hidalgo, and both cities would eventually be built. The city would be located on a level plain, with land suitable for cultivation and grazing as well as raising tropical fruits. The site for the city was three days journey from Guaymas by mule, but a railroad had been constructed one-half of the distance and a charter had been given for the other half.  

Brannan finally had the grant he had worked so hard to obtain, and yet was not able to develop it. First he had a stroke. The attack occurred in the cathedral in Guaymas, and he had to be carried home. His right side was paralyzed—he could not use his arm, lost the hearing in his right ear, and could use his right leg only with difficulty. But even this did not stop Brannan from proceeding with his project. He had someone write the letter to Jesse Little and told Little that he had been confined to his room for three months. The California pioneer was very sick but continued to talk of developing the land until a second disaster struck—yellow fever. What hope remained for the second grant quickly vanished with the fever. The lands reverted to the government because the surveying was not done in the allotted time. Brannan was not bitter about the revocation of the grant, saying that it was part of the contract and that the government

50 Brannan to Little, March 21, 1883, Brannan papers.  
51 Ibid.
was not trying to take advantage of him.  

This was probably the lowest point in Brannan's life, and, as fate would have it, two Mormons passed through Guaymas and visited him. They wrote back to the Deseret News telling of their trip and the meeting with Brannan whom they described as:

partially paralyzed, in the depths of poverty, residing in the most groveling forms of vice. . . . He was half naked and filthy, a pitiable spectacle to behold.  

Another notice, entitled "Prophecy fulfilled," appeared in the Deseret News about a week later. Mr. B. M. Pratt remembered a prophecy Parley P. Pratt had made. He claimed that when Parley P. Pratt was in San Francisco in 1854, he said:

'Go tell Sam Brannan for me that he shall not die till he is in want of ten cents to buy a loaf of bread.' It seems the word of the prophet has been fulfilled.  

It took time for the article to reach Sam Brannan,
but he saw it and responded in the rival Salt Lake Tribune:

With regard to a prophecy of Parley P. Pratt, as
printed in the Deseret News some time since, that I would
die a pauper I don't believe he ever uttered it. If so
he must have been drunk or crazy. I never saw him in
San Francisco, or in any other place, except in New York
... The whole yarn is a pure fabrication of their own.55

He continued by saying that he was not entirely destitute,
that he owned ten lots and two houses in Guaymas, all of which
were rented at good rates. His wife had a double house and
lot which she rented and they boarded with her daughter. He
went on to tell about the two claims he held against the
Mexican government which awaited only the approval of the
Mexican Congress. Brannan might be very ill, but he certainly
was not too sick to combat the brethren in Salt Lake City.

But though Brannan did not die, his recovery was slow
throughout the next year. By February 1884, he was feeling
well enough to be concerned about his appearance and had his
nephew send a bottle of Hall's Hair Restorer and one of
Bachelor's Hair Dye along with his order for hats, slippers,
socks and a toothbrush.56 He was just a shadow of the old
Samuel Brannan and weighed only one hundred and twenty pounds.57

As the summer of 1884 approached, the former Californian decided
to move back to the United States, and near the end of May
he moved to Nogales, Arizona Territory. He left Guaymas

55“Sam Brannan: He tells what he knows about the new
gold fields, and denounces the Mormons as base liars,” Salt
Lake Tribune, May 31, 1883.

56Shipping notice from Alexander Badlam to Samuel Brannan
dated February 8, 1884 and written on stationery printed: Northern
Pacific Express Co., Alex Badlam Agent San Francisco, Badlam papers.

57Brannan to Little, January 1, 1885, Brannan papers.
because he claimed that once yellow fever had been in a town it would return every summer, and he did not want to be there when it came. Also Nogales was a border town where he could be a citizen of the United States and still lobby for a new grant from Mexico.
CHAPTER V

THE THIRD LAND GRANT

I. NOGALES

The move to Nogales agreed with Sam Brannan, and within eight months he had gained fifty pounds and was boasting that he was good for another thirty years.¹ When Brannan located in Nogales it was a town of one thousand people that had been founded less than two years before he arrived. Brannan was soon writing descriptions of the community that would do justice to a chamber of commerce president. He told about the town in a letter to the Nogales Express that was reprinted as a pamphlet² and parts of which were copied by the San Francisco Examiner.³ Using his ability with adjectives, he exalted the climate, industries, agricultural production, and mines in the area, and said that the town was "surrounded with the richest mines in the world—gold, silver, copper, lead, coal, and iron."⁴ He added a note of assurance that the Indian troubles which had so long troubled

¹Brannan to Little, January 27, 1885, Brannan papers.
²Samuel Brannan, Nogales Express (Nogales: n.n. 1884). Reprint of a letter to the editor to the Nogales Express, August 15, 1884.
³San Francisco Examiner, August 11, 1884.
⁴Brannan, p. 1.
the area had "disappeared utterly and forever."\(^5\)

The move from Mexico to the United States did not change Brannan's activities greatly. He was still involved in a combination of finding undeveloped bonanzas and seeking another land grant from Mexico. Brannan had stationery printed for the "Office of Samuel Brannan." As his health improved he was more and more concerned with gaining the grant. In January, 1885, he used this stationery to write to an old friend—Jesse C. Little. In this first letter in nearly two years, Brannan told the Utahn about his mines and sent him a map of them but without the "key" he said was necessary to find them. He had sent the maps only after mature consideration that he could trust Little, who was not to make them public. He gave a description of these mines, which he had located three years earlier by mule. They were within a six days ride into the "Sirra Madra" mountains. There were twenty-eight mines and a mountain of silver in the area.\(^6\) This claim was substantiated by the American consul, who in 1889 wrote a description of the town in which he said that there were good mining districts in every direction and that the prosperity of the area depended largely upon that industry. He concluded saying that: "Comparatively speaking, every third man has a silver mine and his pockets full of ore."\(^7\)

\(^5\)Ibid.

\(^6\)Brannan to Little, January 27, 1885, Brannan papers.

Samuel Brannan told Little what had happened to him in the last two years and said that he was expecting another land grant. It was in the process of being given and would be for 200,000 acres. No tract had been officially given, but Brannan felt confident that the next Mexican congress would approve it and that he could start surveying the land next month.  

The correspondence between the two men became regular from this point. Letters were generally exchanged at least weekly and often more frequently. The former Californian was still very weak and found it easier to use an indelible pencil than a pen. Some of the penciled letters were very light, and Brannan told Little that if he could not read them clearly, he could lick them with his tongue, and the lead would turn to a darker and more readable ink.  

These two men made plans which were changed greatly in the next few months. The unifying feature in their planning was the 200,000 acre grant which Brannan expected from the Mexicans. He never told how his appeals were made to the government nor how word reached him on the grants, but it appears that most of the work was done by a representative Brannan hired in Mexico City to work for him.

In early February, Brannan said that he was going to establish an asylum for the poor and oppressed and make it a

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8 Brannan to Little, January 27, 1885, Brannan papers.
9 Brannan to Little February 5, 1885, Brannan papers.
paradise. Near where the grant was located there was one million acres of public land to which Jesse Little was to bring immigrants. They were entitled to one league each from this land. Brannan's description of the land is another of his descriptive extravaganzas: It was located at the head of the west fork of the Yaqui River and the head of the San Padra, not far from Nacozari. The climate was beautiful, the tillable land had good water, and the mountains were filled with mineral wealth. It was the "richest part of the earth," he said, and he was "veine (sic) enough to think it has been reserved for me and my friends."\(^{10}\)

Brannan's plans remain unclear. He does not tell what benefit he expected to receive by bringing a large number of colonists to Mexican public lands. However, it would be quite contrary to the rest of his life to suppose that his motives were completely altruistic. He may have hoped to increase the value of his own land grant, or he may have been seeking a reward from the Mexican government. Mexico felt strongly her need for immigrants to fill her unoccupied lands and was willing to pay promoters for bringing them. During the 1880's several contracts were made in which the Mexican government agreed to pay promoters from $35 to $700 for every settler they brought into the country.\(^{11}\)

\(^{10}\) Ibid.

\(^{11}\) A list of thirteen such contracts and their terms is found in a letter by P. H. Morgan to Mr. Frelinghuysen in *Foreign Relations, 1883* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), pp. 635–644.
The two men made elaborate preparations for the new settlers. There would be no rush, but the newcomers would come in groups of two or three. Letters were sent to Mexico City to get passes for the pioneers to allow them free passage at the custom houses. The movement would be kept out of the newspapers. Lists were printed of what the immigrants should bring with them. Individuals were instructed to bring among other things, food, camping equipment, a gold washing pan, sledge hammers, a pick, and a shovel, while each group was told to bring such things as pots and kettles, saws, a barometer, bellows etc.

By the middle of February, a new element was added to their plans. In addition to the 200,000 acres the government was going to give him, Brannan was told he could also survey additional lands in Sonora by giving the government one-third of the land. This appears to be a misstatement. The Mexican colonization law of 1875 allowed individuals to survey sections of the public domain for settlement with the surveyor receiving one-third, not two-thirds, of the land mapped.

Brannan was anxious to start the survey, which he hoped could begin the next month. Since no contract had been signed, Jesse Little was apprehensive about their chances, but Brannan

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12 Brannan to Little, February 5, 1885, Brannan papers.
reassured him that he could take care of the Mexican government. "I done (sic) too much for them to go back on me now and the people all know it in the U. S. & Mexico. I have paid them for it and now I am going to have it."\[^{15}\]

II. THE THIRD GRANT

Exciting news reached Brannan about a week later. His representative in Mexico City had made a tentative contract with the government and sent it to Brannan for approval. It not only contained the promise grant of 200,000 acres, but would allow Brannan to survey "all the public lands in the Northern half of Sonora," for one-third of the land surveyed.\[^{16}\] Brannan was very pleased and said that the lands were "the finest lands in the world (The garden of Eadon (sic) not accepted (Sic) )."\[^{17}\]

This new opportunity brought forth all of Brannan's energies. He searched for survey crews to map the land and hired a man as chief surveyor. He purchased instruments and asked Jesse Little about men for members of the survey teams. He wrote letter after letter concerning the grant. The writing often showed great perseverance and courage on Brannan's part. His house was not heated, and it was winter, even though an Arizona winter. He mentioned several times that his hand was getting cold to continue writing, because

\[^{15}\]Brannan to Little, February 11, 1885, Brannan papers.
\[^{16}\]Brannan to Little, February 12, 1885, Brannan papers.
\[^{17}\]Brannan to Little, February 26, 1885, Brannan papers.
he had to leave the door open for light. There were days when he spent the entire morning writing letters. Most of the letters were written to men who had been involved in earlier colonization activities, but he did write Leland Stanford offering him the railroad franchise to the new colonies if he would build the line. Stanford answered that he would consider the proposal and let Brannan know.

III. SEARCH FOR BACKERS

In his continuing search for financing, Brannan did not overlook any possibility. He was even willing to talk with his old brethren the Mormons. Before the grant had been confirmed he had written to John Taylor, the Mormon leader, offering him part of the coming grant. Brannan told Little that he had offered to give Taylor one-half of his 200,000 acres if the church would just settle on it, but cautioned that the story should be kept out of the newspapers. Taylor and Little got different stories. In the letter to Taylor, Brannan offered one-half of his land, it is true, but for one thousand dollars, and not free as he told Jesse Little. He may have changed the story to Little in order to discredit John Taylor in his eyes. He told Taylor that the title to the

18 Brannan to Little, February 12, 1885, Brannan papers.
19 Brannan to Little, February 14, 1885, Brannan papers.
20 Brannan to Little, March 6, 1885, Brannan papers.
21 Brannan to Little, April 16, 1885, Brannan papers.
land was not yet cleared, but assured him that it would be after the next congress met at Mexico City. Brannan also offered the other half of his lands to Taylor on any terms Taylor would name and said that he would meet any representative the Utah church chose to send.

The appeal to the church was not as unusual as it seems. The Mormons were seeking land in Mexico at this time. They had come under censure in the United States and were seeking a place where they could practice their "peculiar doctrine" of polygamy in peace. About a year before, an expedition had been sent from St. David, Arizona to look for a site in Mexico. Another had left a few months later, but neither found a favorable location.

A third expedition was sent about the time Brannan wrote to John Taylor. It was directed by two apostles, Brigham Young Jr., and Heber J. Grant. The group came to Nogales and met Brannan. In describing the event Brannan said that he had known one of the men in the expedition earlier, when both were in Kirtland, Ohio. This man invited him to come to their camp. Brannan did, and his description of the men was surprisingly favorable. Brannan did not tell of the new grant or his current plans, but he tried to advise them about the land they had been investigating. It was at the mouth of the Yaqui River, and Brannan told them it was infested with yellow

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22Brannan to John Taylor, October 16, 1884, original in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Historian's office in the Samuel Brannan file.
fever. He said that the group were "good looking men... to (sic) good to be eat (sic) up by Yellow fever in that cursed hole." Brannan may have mixed a desire to keep the church from finding land in order to help his land with a real desire to help them avoid danger. In any event the warning was given to at least one man who respected the yellow fever—Brigham Young Jr. had almost died of the disease in 1882.

Brannan complained bitterly to Jesse Little that John Taylor had not even answered his letter. Apparently the Mormons had been disillusioned by Brannan and his earlier colonization effort and felt that they could do better by dealing directly with the Mexican government. Also, without a secure title it was hard to sell Brannan's land, even if he was sure it would be granted by the next congress.

In March, 1885, Brannan interrupted the colonization projects long enough to make a trip to Guaymas. He went for two reasons: he needed to take care of some business there, and he wanted to persuade his wife to join him in Nogales. Once the yellow fever had been in Guaymas, Brannan claimed that it would return every summer, and he did not want to be there when it came. He decided to sell the property he owned there. It had cost him five thousand dollars, but he said he would abandon it rather than fear the fever. It had been a lonely

23 Brannan to Little, February 14, 1885, Brannan letters.
25 Brannan to Little, April 16, 1885, Brannan papers.
nine months without his wife, and he finally convinced her to join him in the United States. She agreed to come as soon as she finished some business affairs in Mexico.\footnote{Brannan to Little, February 14, 1885, and March 14, 1885, Brannan papers. Apparently his wife did not come to the United States and this is the last mention of her in Brannan's letters.}

After returning to Nogales, all of Brannan's efforts were again directed toward the grant. In early March, Brannan impatiently awaited official word from Mexico City. He had told the Mexican government that he would accept the contract they had offered and was sure they would respond soon. While he waited, Brannan organized survey parties. Two or three crews would be needed, and two crew chiefs had already been chosen. He wrote to Jesse Little asking him if any of the prospective colonists would like to work on the survey. Brannan felt that he would have no trouble finding men but preferred to give Little's colonists the opportunity.\footnote{Brannan to Little, March 16, 1885, Brannan papers.}

Brannan was never one to put all of his hopes on one person, and so while he waited he wrote to numerous individuals. Brannan often used secrecy and intrigue in his plans and it is often hard to tell if he really distrusted people or if he was only using it for dramatic effect. He made a new appeal to Jesse C. Little, asking him to come to Nogales under an assumed name to discuss business. He said that he did not trust his plans to paper but felt that Little must know them. He offered to give one-half of his 200,000 acre grant if
Little would provide the settlers. The former Mormon said that he wanted Little to bring "all the Mormon boys that is worth a d-m and let the fanatical part follow John Taylor." Brannan promised Little that if he would come, they could discuss the opportunities, and "Then you will know all!" Brannan continued the invitation for almost a month before he was assured the Utahn would come. It is quite possible that the contract Brannan held for the land in Mexico promised a bonus of some kind for each settler he brought into the country. Although not unscrupulous, Brannan always looked out for himself in any business deal, and there was certainly some strong reason to prompt an offer to give one-half of the land.

Good news finally arrived in abundance. In the first week in April Brannan received a letter from Mexico telling him that his contract had been approved. In addition to the grant, he was given the commission to survey the public lands in Sahuaripa and Montezuma districts in Sonora, and the "Chirvawa" (sic) district in Chihuahua. One-third of the land surveyed would become his property. This is what Brannan had been waiting for and he quickly began planning for the survey, hoping to start it by the latter part of the month.

IV. THE CHICAGO COMPANY

However, his plans were completely altered by a

28 Brannan to Little, April 16, 1885, Brannan papers.
29 Brannan to Little, March 8, 1885, Brannan papers.
30 Brannan to Little, April 6, 1885, Brannan papers.
 telegram received five days later from Chicago. The message, signed by William H. A. Brown, said that Brannan could have up to ten million dollars to complete the survey if it required that much. Brannan's letters to old associates had paid off. Brown had been a director in the Sonora Colonization Company of New York and had been approached about backing the new survey. This new backing was appreciated by a man who had lost two previous grants because the survey was not started in time. It appears that the earlier experiences had convinced Brannan that he would need additional financial backing this time and had prompted the numerous letters seeking it.

Some additional details about the contract and Brannan's plans come from an exchange in the San Francisco Daily Post. A Mr. M. O. Beal wrote a letter to the editor calling Brannan a thief and charging that he was attempting to steal the land in Mexico from the Yaqui Indians. The sharp letter brought a quick reply the next night from a Mauvais Agneau, who may have been an agent for Brannan in San Francisco. Agneau gave a quick history of the debt Mexico owed Brannan. He said that the first grant given had been on the Yaqui's land, but that Sam Brannan had refused it. The new "second" grant was a great distance north east of the Yaqui country in the Montezuma and Sahuaripa districts. The grant was to

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31 Brannan to Little, April 10, 1885, Brannan papers.

32 The writer is no doubt referring to the third grant rather than the second grant.
survey the "unoccupied" land in these areas. After filing the land with the government the land would be sold "to saint or sinner at from $1 to $10 per acre, until Mr. B. is fully paid." Agneau claimed to have a copy of the agreement and would be willing to show it to anyone who doubted that he had presented its terms accurately.

April and May, 1885, were busy months for Brannan. Jesse C. Little came to Nogales to visit him, possibly under the requested assumed name, and discussed the possibilities ahead. Other important visitors also came. William Brown came from Chicago and brought with him John A. Kruse. Kruse was to play an important role in the actual survey of the land. Kruse's first job was to travel to Mexico City to make final arrangements for the survey, and, no doubt, to discover all he could about the grant for the new backers.

In the middle of May, 1885, an event took place which was to have a profound effect on the survey. Geronimo led a group of Apaches out of the Fort Apache Reservation and headed toward Mexico. The Apaches had long been associated with the lands Brannan hoped to survey and own. They had driven out the Spanish, and their conquest was helping to open these

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33 San Francisco Daily Post, April 21, 1885, see also April 20, 1885.

34 John A. Kruse had a varied career. He was associated with the Sonora Land Company until at least 1914. He was also President of the Lone Star Iron Company, President of the Chicago Street Car Air Brake Company, and President of the John A. Kruse Engineering Company. Letter from Nancy Fisher, Assistant Reference Librarian, Chicago Historical Society, June 28, 1967.
lands for Brannan. This group of American Apaches could easily give the surveyors great problems, since they had to work in isolated areas in small groups. Brannan was overly optimistic and felt that the Indians would give them no trouble. General Crook would quickly take them back to the reservation, and the difficulty would be of short duration. Besides, the Indians were going toward the Gila River and would not be allowed to enter Sonora. There were other Indian troubles in the area. The Yaqui Indians, enboldened by the Apache revolt, started an uprising. Seemingly this revolt bothered Brannan even less than that of the Apaches. He claimed the revolt would work for their good, because the Yaqui were his friends and would flock to the new colony for work.

The Indian problem did not slow the eternally optimistic Brannan's plans for the colony and he wrote Jesse Little telling him of numerous organizational details. He hoped to complete the whole survey during the coming summer and winter. Settlers could come as soon as possible, but would need a certificate from a Mexican consul to be given duty free entrance into the country. Little was instructed to make arrangements for group rates on the railroad. The head agents should ride free, and the colonists should be given a discount. The first town would be located on the head waters of the

35 Brannan to Little May 31, 1885, Brannan papers.
36 Brannan to Little, May 27, 1885, Brannan papers.
Yaqui and "San Padro" Rivers, and the new settlement would stretch from there southward. Brannan said that it was not yet possible to determine what the land would cost the colonists, but the first families would be given one hundred and sixty acres. The pioneers must be taken care of and should grow rich. Reminiscences crept into the planning, and Brannan asked what the saints who had come to California with him would be worth now if they had stayed in California and had not gone to Salt Lake City. He was sure it would be "millions upon millions." These new colonists would become rich. The leaders should search out the best water rights early, and Brannan confidently predicted that the "largest manufacturing facilities in America," could be built in this "Paradice (sic) of the American Continent."  

Brannan's confident predictions about the Indians did not prove to be correct and although seemingly they did not bother Brannan, they did bother others. Leland Stanford wrote declining the offer to build the railroad because of the Apache uprisings.

There are few things that are as hard to bear as waiting, and Brannan was called upon to do a great deal of it during the first weeks of the summer. Kruse left for Mexico in the middle of May to make final arrangements for the survey

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37 Ibid.
38 Brannan to Little, May 31, 1885, Brannan papers.
39 Brannan to Little, June 4, 1885, Brannan papers.
and promised to let Brannan know when the grant was confirmed. Word did not come, and Brannan was getting edgy. He was worried about the delay. The survey was ready to go as soon as word was received. Arrangements had been made for surveyors and surveying instruments, but the survey would run out in just over a month unless notification was given. The man who had lost two grants because the surveying had not been done on time was clearly worried. He was still optimistic enough to say that if Kruse lost the survey it could be gained again, but his optimism was wearing thin.  

A week later he sent Little a post card filled with relief. A letter had been received from Kruse, and he would come to Nogales in about ten days. The survey also appeared to be safe. Word had already been given to the judge in Guaymas registering the survey, which would give them two years to complete the work. Kruse was in Chicago reporting to the company and would return in ten days with the papers for Brannan to sign to start the survey.  

Brannan was not the only one who had been worried. Jesse Little was also very concerned and wrote to the Californian offering to send one thousand dollars to get the survey started. Brannan needed no urging. He telegraphed to send the money, saying he would use it to start the survey of his 200,000 acres. They were not included in the agreement with  

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40 Ibid.  
41 Brannan to Little, June 15, 1885, Brannan papers.
Brannan still did not spend his energy completely in one activity. The new prospects for success allowed him to speculate more about other commercial opportunities in Sonora. He told Jesse Little about a house he needed to buy. It would be used for Brannan's headquarters and a store, and he hoped Little knew of someone to buy it. Brannan was never one to minimize what they could control and operate, and wrote to Little of joint operation of a store, bank, hotel, livery stable, saloon, gambling house, laundry, and everything else in the area which could be controlled. Brannan said they would have to undersell the Jews, and might need to "rout (sic) this population out of here horse Dragoon, Jews & all, but the Trinidad Co. they (sic) are rich and we want them." Brannan stressed the need to hurry in these activities, because in about a year the railroad would be completed into the area, and by the time it came they should have everything in the state of Sonora in their hands.

Throughout the rest of June, Brannan waited for Kruse to arrive from Chicago. Brannan was still not certain whether he could trust Kruse and was anxiously waiting to talk with the man. He feared that the grant might have been lost and wrote Jesse Little that if he would send the one thousand dollars, the survey would be started with or without Kruse.

42 Telegram Brannan to Little, June 18, 1885, Brannan papers. See also Brannan to Little, June 26, 1885, Brannan papers.

43 Brannan to Little, June 20, 1885, Brannan papers.
and perhaps the grant could be saved if it had been lost.\textsuperscript{44}

Good news finally arrived. On the last day of June, Brannan reported that Kruse had finally arrived from Chicago,\textsuperscript{45} and two days later he received four hundred dollars from J. C. Little.\textsuperscript{46} Kruse brought a great deal of news. He claimed to have written Brannan twice from Mexico, and said that he found just before he left that the small boy who had been given the job of taking the letters to the post office had taken the stamps and thrown away the letters. Kruse told Brannan of his activities in Mexico City, and that it had been necessary to distribute some of the land in order to get the agreement confirmed. President Diaz' father-in-law was now working for the company and would receive one-fortieth of the land for his services.\textsuperscript{47}

V. THE SURVEY

Agreements were drawn up between the Chicago company and Brannan, and he reported them to Jesse Little. Brannan said that the company had agreed to pay all expenses involved with the surveying of the land. Their pay would be part of the land the government gave for surveying. The government gave the surveyors one-third of the land they mapped, and Brannan said that the company would require one-fourth of this

\textsuperscript{44}Brannan to Little, June 26, 1885, Brannan papers.
\textsuperscript{45}Brannan to Little, June 30, 1885, Brannan papers
\textsuperscript{46}Brannan to Little, July 2, 1885, Brannan papers.
\textsuperscript{47}Brannan to Little, July 8, 1885, and July 14, 1885, Brannan papers.
one-third. A tentative agreement was also drawn up for the mines. Again the company would pay all of the expenses in opening the mines and receive a percentage of the profits. In addition, Brannan was to receive seventy-five dollars a month from the company for the mines. The contract was to be approved or rejected within fifteen days of Kruse's arrival in Chicago. Financing these two projects would require a large amount of money, but Brannan did not doubt the ability of his backers to pay the bills. He claimed they had "the richest backers in Europe or London." 

Kruse was to be the company's manager in getting the actual survey completed so much of his time was spent in arranging the details for the survey. One of the most important projects was making legal arrangements with the local authorities. A court case in Guaymas threatened to stop the survey before it got started. A rival company, the Chihuahua Company under President Gonzales, was trying to extend its surveying rights into Sonora. A lengthy struggle ensued that was finally decided in favor of the Americans. With the legal problems out of the way, the survey could begin, and by the middle of July, 1885, the surveyors were at last in the field. Brannan told Little that settlers would soon be needed, but the movement should go slow until they saw how the survey was going. There was another problem

48 Brannan to Little, July 14, 1885, Brannan papers.
49 Ibid.
which needed to be removed before actual settlers arrived. It was likely that there would be some litigation over the land titles, and this should be taken care of before the rush started.\footnote{Ibid.}

It would be hard to overstate the relief Brannan felt. The survey had been approved, local permission granted, and actual work had started. Brannan had been forced to wait without knowing what was happening and without being able to do anything to help. For a man who loved to be involved in the center of things, it must have been hard to bear. He wrote to Jesse Little that he had just "passed through the most severe ordeal of my whole life. . . . Doubt and suspense is (sic) a hard thing to endure (sic) but it is over Thank God."\footnote{Ibid.}

Brannan was by nature suspicious and often melodramatic. He became concerned when Little did not answer some of his letters and gave him stern instructions about the letters: "You must not allow any one to read my letters until you have read them—Don't (sic) trust wife or child—it is a critical time."\footnote{Brannan to Little, July 29, 1885, Brannan papers.}

It is interesting to note the relationship between Brannan and Little. Despite this rather sharp interchange, there appears to have been a great deal of mutual respect. Apparently from their earlier contacts they felt that the other could accomplish what he claimed to be able to accomplish. Their relationship with the Mormon church is also interesting. Brannan often wrote sharp things against the church, and yet, Little, a Mormon, was in charge of getting colonists for him, and in Utah, where a large majority of the people were Mormons. Brannan at times apparently felt that he had gone too far with
cepting the mail and not giving it to the Utahn. He would take new precautions. From this point all letters would be numbered to insure their delivery. He said that he was: "certain there is a Nigger in the fence, and I am certain to cach (sic) him!" 53

The Indian uprising continued throughout the summer and by the first of August had become so bad that the survey had to be suspended. 54 Since the mapping must be completed within a certain time limit, any delay might be disastrous. So that the delay would not mean the loss of the grant, the company petitioned for a permit to allow them to take more time if it was needed. Three weeks later Kruse obtained such permission. Notwithstanding this permission, the company was anxious not to delay the work, and by the end of August a team was back in the field. 55

The contracts between the company and Brannan were signed near the end of August, 1885. The terms were quite different than those Brannan had reported earlier to J. C. Little. The company was still to do all of the surveying and receive payment in part of the land the government would give, but the contract gave the company three-fourths of this land. 56

his attacks on the church, and told Little he hoped his views had not offended him.

53 Brannan to Little, August 7, 1885, Brannan papers.
54 Brannan to Little, August 2, 1885, Brannan papers.
55 Brannan to Little, August 27, 1885, Brannan papers.
56 Brannan to Little, August 22, 1885, Brannan papers.
Brannan had intimated earlier that the company would get only one-fourth of the land. This meant that the company would receive three-fourths of the one-third of the land the government gave for surveying, or one-fourth of the land they mapped. This land did not include the 200,000 acre grant Brannan had been given, and Brannan felt that the amount of land the company would survey might go as high as four to five million acres.

VI. THE MEXICAN MINES

The company had decided not to sign the contract for the mines. Brannan had been certain they would, but an agreement had not been reached. He felt that Kruse had insisted on too large a percentage of the mines without considering the amount that had already been spent on their development.

Brannan now had to find financial backing to open the mines himself. He wrote to several men seeking the backing. He asked Jesse Little if he knew of anyone who might like to buy in on them. He offered a one-third interest to anyone who would pay for the tools, food, and men for opening them. The work would be helped by a wagon road which was now within fifty miles of the thirty-two mines. The plan was to open the richest two mines first. They were "bonanzers," and would provide enough money to open the others. As the mines were opened they could be sold or developed as the backers saw fit.

57 Brannan to Little, July 14, 1885, Brannan papers.
58 Brannan to Little, August 27, 1885, Brannan papers.
With almost unbelievable exaggeration, Brannan said that, "When they are all opened it will give employment to 20,000,000 men or more." It was the greatest financial opportunity on the continent for so little investment. Using an old sales approach, Brannan told Jesse Little that if he knew of someone who would buy the mines they had better hurry because one of Brannan's old friends from Sacramento was anxious to buy them.

Other details dealing with the Mexican lands were progressing well. On paper there were a great many colonists. Little wrote that he had one thousand families ready to leave for Sonora, and a Mr. Henderson, a mining engineer in Rapid City, Dakota Territory, wrote saying that he had five hundred miners ready and willing to come. He said that the men would come in January after their present assignment was finished. Little was urged to hurry in finding a backer for the mines so that the mines would be ready when the miners were. Jesse Little was anxious to fulfill his obligations and advertise for additional colonists, but Brannan said that it would be better to wait until the Apache scare was over and the survey had progressed far enough to give the public confidence in the project.

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59 Brannan to Little, September 7, 1885, Brannan papers.
60 Ibid. This number almost equaled half the population of the United States.
61 Brannan to Little, August 19, 1885 and September 17, 1885, Brannan papers.
62 Brannan to Little, August 27, 1885, Brannan papers.
In September a new problem arose with the survey. Before each section of the survey could be started, the signature of a federal judge was needed. In September the company needed such a signature, but the judge in Guaymas to whom they applied was ill. No one else could sign the permit without special permission. The judge's secretary had been given permission to sign the papers if his employer died, but as long as he was alive there appeared to be little they could do but wait. However, the waiting and special appeals bore fruit at last. Their attorney, wrote that the government had appointed another judge for the case. The papers were signed, and the survey could continue. 63

The Mormons reappeared in Brannan's life during the late summer and early fall of 1885. Brigham Young Jr. went through Nogales during the first week in August. He was traveling from Mexico City to Salt Lake City, and Brannan wrote to Jesse Little asking him to find out why Young had gone to the Mexican capital. Brannan showed a very defensive attitude when he told Little about the episode saying that the church had better leave him alone or he would make it hot for them. 64 A month later Brannan said that they had made a large silver strike in their Mexican colonies. 65 He seemed almost

63 Brannan to Little, September 3, 1885, Brannan papers.
64 Ibid.
65 For details on the Mormon colonies see: Nelle Spilsbury Hatch, Colonia Juarez (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1954); Andrew Jensen, "Juarez," Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941), pp. 380-382; Florence C. Lister, and
friendly when he reported it to Little, saying that it was rumored that the mines were "immensely rich" and he was "glad of it."65 *The New York Times* said that the Mormons had found five old, abandon mines and that it was estimated that five million dollars worth of silver was already in sight.67

As fall approached the company could see that the earlier hopes of finishing the survey by fall had been entirely too optimistic. The company made now preparations, and near the middle of September, 1885, Kruse bought a house in Nogales to serve as an office. From this office he finished the appeal to the federal judge in Guaymas, and when it had been granted returned to the field with a crew of fifteen to commence the survey again.68

There was little Brannan could do about the survey, and so his attention turned to the mines. He was very anxious to get started with them that fall, and searched several places for the required backing. If he could not get any other backing, he decided to sell part of his interest in the land to get a mining outfit but still hoped this would not be necessary. Brannan even wrote to his son, "Junior," asking him to help


65 Brannan to Little, September 7, 1885, Brannan papers.
67 Brannan to Little, September 11, 1885, Brannan papers.
finance the mines. His son was living in Mexico and working two mines near the headwaters of the Yaqui River. 69

Again Brannan did not place confidence in any one source of backing—not even his son and he wrote to Jesse Little asking him to find someone to finance the mines. Apparently he was more confident of finding the backing, however, because he offered the person financing the venture a smaller interest in the mines for more money. One month earlier he had offered one-third of the mines if the person would supply the equipment and men. Now he offered only one-fourth and asked the person to pay one thousand dollars plus all supplies, which he estimated would take about two thousand dollars more. This was quite a change for a man who had been willing to give the Chicago company three-fourths of the mines if they would pay all of the costs. 70

Near the mines was a ranch which Brannan told Little he must have "by hook or by crok (sic)." The ranch controlled the approaches to the mines. It was three leagues in size, and Brannan, always good with the dramatic flair, said that it contained a pass which could be defended by two hundred men against twenty thousand. He wanted to buy it before opening the mines. He could not tell Little the price but said he would find out when he went there later in the fall. The ranch contained good land and a good site for a town. He claimed

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69 Brannan to Little, September 14, 1885, Brannan papers.
70 Brannan to Little, September 22, 1885, Brannan papers.
that it would be worth one-half million dollars as soon as it was purchased. Brannan offered the land to one of Little's settlers, if he could find one that wanted to buy it, but he also convinced William Brown of its value, and the Chicagoan was also negotiating for it.\footnote{Brannan to Little, September 17, 1885, Brannan papers.}

As the fall lengthened, Jesse Little became more and more apprehensive about their prospects of success. Brannan continued to be the eternal optimist and assured him that everything was going fine. He told the Utahn that he would soon be able to sleep at night and said that the problem was that he had "not got used (sic) to handling (sic) big things."\footnote{Brannan to Little, September 22, 1885, Brannan papers.}

During the fall Nogales increasingly became the center for the company's activities. Kruse had opened the office there, and soon additional occupants came; "Mr. Dumfries," the treasurer for the survey, and Mr. Poston, the agent for the sale of the land once the survey was completed.\footnote{The identity of the two men is still uncertain, but it appears that "Dumfries" was John Dunphy, a Chicago businessman, and that Mr. Poston was Charles D. Poston an early Arizona pioneer.} The survey was directed from Nogales with only minor complications such as one party being fired for drunkeness. Brannan took a keen interest in the progress of the survey, and selected a man to be his agent on the survey. The man would be a member of the crew, and when any especially promising land was found, he would secretly take note of it for Brannan. Brannan
would then choose it as part of his 200,000 acres. The survey was making good progress, and near the end of October Dumfries told Brannan that they were almost completed with the Arizpa District. Brannan said that he doubted it, but would wait and see.

New Indian hostilities broke out in November, and it is often hard to tell whose side Brannan was on. The earlier conflicts had brought forth only pleas that they would soon end and then the survey could be continued. The response this time was different. Brannan, apparently tired of being delayed by the Indian uprisings, started to look for ways to use the conflicts in his favor. He wrote to Little asking him to find out about a dynamite gun and get some men to handle it. He said that he knew the Yaqui, and that they knew and respected him. He proposed to join forces with the Indians and with the help of the dynamite gun defeat the Mexican forces within thirty days. In return for engineering this victory, the Inidans would be willing to give him one-half of their lands. These lands he described as being ninety miles long and fifty miles inland. He intimated that the Mexicans were trying to get the Indian's land, but "instead of that, the Yaquis would get the whole state (or we would)."

Brannan assured Little that he could make "any arrangements I

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74 Brannan to Little, September 28, 1885, Brannan papers.
75 Brannan to Little, October 25, 1885, Brannan papers.
please with the Yaquis."  

Brannan extended his plans when he wrote:

I think it is feasible and a cheap remedy, and Mexico dare not interfere against Dynamite and Sonora would be independent, and annex to the U.S. If she saw fit.  

While he was planning ways to use the uprisings for his own good, he was also concerned with the delay they were causing in the survey. He wrote to Little that he was losing faith in Kruse. It was true that there were problems caused by these conflicts, but he was starting to wonder if the surveyor was able to meet the emergency.

By the end of November, things were moving much more smoothly. Kruse had additional men in the field and reported that he would travel to Mexico City next month and report the progress on the survey. One week later the company finished surveying the first block in the Arizpa District. Brannan thought that it would contain up to five or six million acres of land. The land would need to be submitted to the Mexican government for approval. The land was described as being the best land in the survey but did not contain the best mines. This achievement served as an impetus for the surveyors' activities. Programs were stepped up, and new men were sent

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76 Brannan to Little, November 3, 1885, Brannan papers.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 Brannan to Little, November 18, 1885, Brannan papers.
VII. OTHER INTERESTS

As the winter came, Brannan's time was less and less needed to help the survey, so he turned to other activities, as he did almost every winter. Brannan's was an active mind and needed new outlets and new mountains to climb. The plans he made in connection with the Yaqui Indians and dynamite gun are an example. It is likely that Brannan clearly saw the limitations of the plan but was willing to discuss and look at almost any project which offered a quick return.

The investigation of dynamite prompted a more feasible plan. The old Californian became increasingly interested in the possibility of using dynamite to remove ore and of using electricity to smelt the ore. He wrote to Jesse Little about the opportunities, and took the preliminary steps in forming a company to do the job in partnership with William Brown. By the first of December Brannan could write that Brown had obtained one dynamite man and would organize the company and issue stock from Chicago. Plans were laid for the workings of the company. Salaries of the man would be low at first, and laborers would have to be stock holders and receive part of their wages in company stock. But low wages would be only a temporary condition, and soon the company would be paying "the highest wages going." Brannan was enthusiastic about the

80 Brannan to Little, November 24, 1885, Brannan papers.
81 Brannan to Little, December 1, 1885, Brannan papers.
82 Brannan to Little, November 26, 1885, Brannan papers.
company and was sure it would be a great success. He reported that the local miners were also very excited about the company which would be organized the next spring. Brannan was soon recruiting these men. He wrote to New York trying to get two of the men who had helped blow up Hell's Gate in the East River. Brannan was sure that he would have little trouble getting them. The California pioneer became a bit over enthusiastic about the possibilities of the new venture when he said that it would, "overthrow all the Kings and Priests on Earth," and that "Electricity has cured me, and Dynomite (sic) & Electricity combined will make all the world rich that believe in it."

Brannan looked into other opportunities. He built a windmill and started a fishpond. He speculated about the real estate opportunities. There was a shortage of rentable houses in Nogales, and Brannan confidently predicted that

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83 Brannan to Little, December 1, 1885, Brannan papers.
84 For details see The New York Times, October 4, 1885, and October 9-13, 1885.
85 Brannan to Little, December 10, 1885, Brannan papers.
86 Brannan to Little, November 16, 1885, Brannan papers.
87 What Brannan meant when he said that electricity had cured him is unclear, however, in one letter he told Jesse Little, "I am using the Electrict (sic) belt and I think I am getting better." Brannan to Little, May 20, 1885, Brannan papers. One of the objects Alexander Badlam sent to his uncle was an electric hair brush. Alexander Badlam's account book, no date, Badlam papers.
88 Brannan to Little, January 13, 1886, Brannan papers.
89 Brannan to Little, November 16, 1885, Brannan papers.
anyone who built small houses there could get back from five to ten per-cent per month on his investment.  

Near the end of the year, Brannan was able to rejoice "The day has donned (sic)," he wrote. A peace treaty had been made with the Yaquis. He sent Little a newspaper with a copy of the treaty in it. The peace was welcome not only because depredations would stop, but because the Indians could be used for labor in the new settlement. Brannan claimed to have an agreement with the nephew of Cajeme, the main chief. The nephew was a sub-chief, and had agreed to contract for all the labor Brannan could use.  

The Apache raids continued, but Brannan took an almost philosophical approach to the conflict feeling that it would work for the company's good. It would draw the attention of the entire world to Sonora, and soon there would be a bigger boom in Sonora than there had been in California. Sonora was an almost ideal place, and did not have the problems California had in "floods, fires, Vigilant Committees, China men and Devil knows what all."  

The early months of 1886 were filled with the same combination of concern with the survey and concern with new

90 Brannan to Little, November 24, 1885, Brannan papers.  
91 Brannan to Little, December 27, 1885, Brannan papers.  
92 See Edward Spicer, Cycles of Conquest (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962), pp. 71-72. The treaty Brannan mentions was never signed, and at the beginning of the next year, both sides prepared for war.  
93 Brannan to Little, January 15, 1886, Brannan papers.
and promising activities. Much time was spent talking about railroad development. Brannan had a governmental grant to build a road from the Sonora Railroad to any point he located on the Yaqui River—from the head to the mouth of the river. Brannan had given up on getting the Central Pacific to do it, stating that "if anyone could reach Stanford it would be me."\(^{94}\) Brannan inquired of Jesse Little if he knew of a strong man to take it over. He would give up three-fourths of the company for nothing. Stanford had been reluctant because he did not think it could be done, but Brannan was certain it would be finished within three years, "Stanford, Apaches and Old Crook, notwithstanding."\(^{95}\)

The surveying and colonizing plans continued. By the end of January the survey of the Arizpa district was finished.\(^{96}\) Jesse Little was anxious to push on quickly with the colonization project. He wrote and sent to Brannan for approval a circular telling of the lands. Brannan returned it with some corrections but requested that it not be printed or published in the newspapers yet. For the present the information should be passed from one person to another masonically, and nothing should be published until the lands were surveyed and divided. With a flair for the dramatic, secret signs were to be used to identify a friend. The sign was to place the right hand on the top of the head, and the answer the left hand on

\(^{94}\) Ibid.
\(^{95}\) Ibid.
\(^{96}\) Brannan to Little, January 26, 1886, Brannan papers.
the head. Anyone betraying the confidence of the organization would be placed on a black list and not allowed to gain the privileges of the organization.97

A change took place in the relationship between Samuel Brannan and Jesse Little about February. Letters became less frequent, coming monthly and not weekly. The reasons for the change are obscure, but it appears that Jesse Little was beginning to tire of the bargain. The continual promises of quick returns coupled with few tangible achievements to show for the time and money expended and the continual waiting for some new development before putting full effort into the colonization were having a telling effect.

Near the end of March, 1886, Brannan wrote a letter filled with explanations and encouragement. He pointed to the obstacles the group was working with—two Indian Wars and a prejudice in the United States against Mexico. The company had done wonders in finishing the Arizpa District, and the map of the district was being finished to send to Mexico City. Finding surveyors to face the Apaches was hard and costly. A feeling comes through the letter that Brannan thought that perhaps Little did not have the patience to continue as an active partner in the enterprise. Brannan wrote that, "This is one of the biggest (sic) things out, and requires patience, and I have got it. I expect to be two years at it yet, if not my whole life.98" His change in attitude is shown in a

97 Brannan to Little, January 26, 1886, Brannan papers.
98 Brannan to Little, March 31, 1886, Brannan papers.
needling remark about the surveyors. Brannan wrote that they needed more men, and he wished they had some of Little's men to help with the survey, "if you have any."99

VIII. SURVEY PROBLEMS

The company not only had to survey the land but record the maps with various groups, and so in May, 1886, after the maps of the Arizpa district were complete, Kruse went to have them recorded. He traveled to Guaymas to record them with the federal judge there and to Hermosillo to see the governor.100 He then traveled to Mexico City to record the survey there. The various trips were successful, and by the end of June the land surveyed in Arizpa had been deeded to the company. Brannan's share of the land was about ten leagues. There were about 4,444 acres to a league, giving him about 40,500 acres. With the first district finished Brannan looked to the other two and said that they had a year and a few months to complete the Montezuma and Sahuaripa districts.101

Although Brannan had been very optimistic about the Indian problems the previous fall, he became more and more pessimistic during the spring and summer as the raids became more intense. In May he wrote that the whole country was up in arms. The forces of the United States and Mexico were in hot pursuit of one hundred and fifty Apaches, and more United

99Ibid.
100Brannan to Little, May 7, 1886, Brannan papers.
101Brannan to Little, June 20, 1886, Brannan papers.
States troops were expected on the train that evening. The uprising was becoming so wide spread that General Crook's scouts were leaving the reservations to join the rebels. General Crook did not succeed in ending the uprisings, and he was replaced by General Nelson A. Miles, an officer Brannan thought was the man to do the job. "We think he is the right man in the right place." Brannan was quite optimistic at this point and hoped the conflict would be ended within two months.

Three weeks later Brannan was still optimistic, but now he hoped the Apache war would be ended by the fall, rather than the two months he had previously predicted. The Yaqui uprising had been stopped with two thousand prisoners taken and one hundred Indians killed. Brannan hoped he could start for the mines in the fall and thought the two wars and the survey would be out of the way by then. He confidently predicted that the party he would take would be the best equipped one ever to make the trip. He expected to stay there about two months and leave a colony there for future operations.

One week later his optimism had declined. He said that the raids were continuing, and "Uncle Sam's pets" were doing nothing. The Apaches had everything their own way and

102 Brannan to Little, May 7, 1886, Brannan papers.

103 Brannan was referring to the battle of Buatachive, later reports listed two hundred and not one hundred killed. In addition to the military defeat, the Yaqui were struck with smallpox, but it still did not mark the end of the Yaqui War. Spicer, p. 72.

104 Brannan to Little, May 27, 1886, Brannan papers.
were doing "a land office business." He had, "given up all hope of their being subdued." But the Indian uprisings did not stop the survey, which continued through the spring and summer. Near the end of May, when one of the crews was entering the field, Brannan told Little that the surveyors did not need troops to guard them, because they were better than troops. A week later he was more subdued about his claims. When sixteen men left for the field he said that, "some of them will bit (sic) the ground before they get back." Three weeks later there were eighteen men in the field, and Brannan cautiously hoped that the survey could be finished by fall if the Apaches did not molest them. By the end of August he simply said, "nothing but war news and that you read in the papers before I could write it." Even with these problems the survey made good progress through the summer, and by the middle of November, 1886, Brannan wrote that they were finished making maps of the Montezuma district and that they would finish the survey there in another month and start on the Sahuaripa district.

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105 Brannan to Little, June 2, 1886, Brannan papers.
106 Brannan to Little, May 27, 1886, Brannan papers.
107 Brannan to Little, June 2, 1886, Brannan papers.
108 Brannan to Little, June 20, 1886, Brannan papers.
109 Brannan to Little, August 29, 1886, Brannan papers.
110 Brannan to Little, November 15, 1886, Brannan papers.
IX. FEELINGS ABOUT MORMONISM

As the winter came, Brannan found himself with more time on his hands. Again the tone of his letters changed from the survey to speculation and discussion. The subjects mentioned were very different than they were the year before. Where Brannan had told about a variety of money making schemes, he now centered mainly on religion. However, it was not the religious talk of a man who feels that he is about to join his Maker, but centered upon the Mormon Church and its practice of polygamy. The Mormons were engaged in a conflict with the United States government about polygamy. Congress had made several laws prohibiting the practice, but the Mormons, feeling that it was a religious and not a civil practice had refused to comply with the new laws. Brannan remarked that a new penitentiary being built in Salt Lake City would be very convenient for the polygamists. He said that no system could survive that enslaved women and especially white women. It would be folly to think that you can enslave the mothers without disastrous results to the society. The United States had cleaned herself of slavery at a great cost of life and money and would do the same with polygamy if it took "the blood and money of fifty million people."\footnote{Brannan to Little, November 15, 1836, and December 31, 1886, Brannan papers.}

no institution that makes a slave of women, can prosper under a government of the people, and that is God's
goverment (sic), Brigham Young not with standing. 112

It is a strang (sic) fanaticism that a people can suppose they can establish a branch of Paganism and Mahometanism at this age of the world, after witnessing (sic) the overthrow of slavery and the gradual down fall of Caniballism (sic). 113

The practice of Polygamy, will be the overthrow of all the nations, that uphold it. As History has proven. Women are the mothers of great men & Nations, and should be looked up at instead of down, and so I told Brigham & Heber that day before I left Salt Lake in 47 and have never changed my mind. I think I will see it anihilated (sic) before I step out. 114

The trip to the mines had been delayed because of one problem after another, but it had not been forgotten. In December, 1886, Brannan wrote that he had expected to leave for the mountains by the first of January, but the man who was going with him had caught "neumonia" (sic). He did not know when he would go, but he would write when he left. 115

X. THE COMPANY'S MINES

During the spring of 1887 one of the unanswered questions of Brannan's life appeared. The Chicago company found some mines very much like those Brannan was trying to develop. No letter to Little about the discovery remains, and about a month after the discovery Brannan told Little that he had not written because of the lack of news. 116

It appears that

112 Brannan to Little, December 24, 1886, Brannan papers.
113 Brannan to Little, November 15, 1886, Brannan papers.
114 Ibid.
115 Brannan to Little, December 22, 1886, Brannan papers.
116 Brannan to Little, May 17, 1887, Brannan papers.
that the company did not find all of Brannan's mines, but it has been impossible to determine if the company found part of his mines, or in fact, what happened to Brannan's mines.

The reports of the company's discovery are all secondary accounts, but it was widely noted. The St. Louis Globe reported it, as did the New York Times. The dispatch appearing in the Nogales Record quoted the St. Louis Dispatch report and gave a history of the mines and their spectacular worth. It said that the mines had been the richest in the world when the Indians drove out the miners in 1856. Maximilian sent out an expedition which found the mines, and a French civil engineer made a map of the region. When word was received that Maximilian had been killed, the group fled for their lives. The engineer took refuge with a priest in Sonora, and as he fled the country, he left the map there.

The newspaper report continued that a surveying party including W. Flipper, who had recently left the army, W. Glenn, M. J. Power, Captain Allen, and J. McIntyre were working

117 St. Louis Globe account quoted in Nogales Record, May 26, 1887.
118 New York Times, April 28, 1887, and April 29, 1887.
119 Nogales Record, May 26, 1887.
120 Flipper was a negro graduate of West Point, who after serving on the border left the army. He spent several years in Chihuahua surveying and investigating records for mining companies. See J. Frank Dobie, Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939), p. 203.
in the area. They gained possession of the map "from a private source" and found evidence in an old church of its truthfulness. They then began a thorough search for the mines. Before this, the report said, the survey parties found it necessary to remain in a group because of the Indian menace, but that now they were able to separate. The main party had divided into four groups, agreeing to meet at a prearranged place. They had been in the field for about four months, and had found several mines and workings, including mines they believed to be the "Tayona," and the "Guaynopa." The latter one, they said, had one chamber that was one hundred feet wide, four hundred feet long and ninety feet high. The ore samples they removed assayed out at sixteen dollars a ton, which they compared to the Homestake mine which was making great profits on ore bringing three dollars and eighty cents a ton. Mr. Powers claimed the mine for Mr. Kruse and himself. The report said that Powers was the "expert" who had tested the principal part of the comstock lode in Nevada.¹²¹ An account in the New York Times carrying a Chicago dateline told of the Sonora Land Company of Chicago which owned the land. In addition to John Dunphy and J. R. Kruse, it mentioned F. P. Wheeler, P. J. Howard, R. P. Travers, and Manual Perriche as members of the company, but did not include Samuel Brannan's name.¹²²

Another New York Times dispatch ended with the note that

¹²¹Nogales Record, May 26, 1887.
¹²²New York Times, April 29, 1887.
"great excitement in the mining centers prevails."\(^{123}\)

Brannan's connection with these mines remains elusive. He claimed to have a map with a similar background, and whether he was the "private source" the company received it from is not known. The company claimed to find two mines, and Brannan had thirty-two, so they might have been some of his. A year later Brannan wrote to his nephew, Alexander Badlam, telling him that Kruse was looking for his mines and was within forty miles of one,\(^{124}\) indicating at least that the company had not found all of them. It is unlikely that the map came to the company directly from Brannan. It was not like the man to take a back seat in such a spectacular development. He would likely have been very much in the center of any such development.

XI. THE SURVEY COMPLETED

The major goal of the Sonora Land Company remained the survey, and it was finished by May, 1887. Kruse went to Mexico City to get the approval for the survey and a division of the land. The completion of this division would take until the next fall. After the division took place, Brannan planned to apply for his additional two hundred thousand acres. Then, he told Little, there would be a need for settlers and he could continue the colonization projects.\(^{125}\)

\(^{123}\)New York Times, April 28, 1887.

\(^{124}\)Brannan to Badlam, May 24, 1888, Badlam papers.

\(^{125}\)Brannan to Little, May 17, 1887, Brannan papers.
A month later, Brannan wrote to say that there was some trouble in getting the title arranged, but when the land was given to the company it would amount to about two and one-half million acres. Brannan's share would be four-fortieths, or two hundred and sixty-two thousand acres. In order to avoid a Mexican law prohibiting their President from selling land within sixty miles of the United States line, the company held title to the land, and the individuals held stock in the company. Brannan asked Little if he could find someone to buy part or all of his shares. He had four shares and offered to sell them at eight thousand dollars a share. A "hansome (sic) commission" was offered for such a service. The end of the adventure in Mexican lands was in sight, and Brannan turned his sights on new adventures. He told Little that as soon as he claimed his two hundred thousand acres he would move to San Diego, which he claimed would, "be the next big boom or I would not sell out at present."

126 Brannan to Little, June 6, 1887, Brannan papers.
127 Ibid.
CHAPTER VI

RETURN TO CALIFORNIA

With the completion of the land survey, Brannan's major reason for staying in Arizona was ended. There were certainly other speculative opportunities in the area, but Brannan was still a Californian at heart. California had been good to him, and he decided to move back to the coast. He moved to San Diego, which was much more undeveloped than San Francisco, his old home.

In November, 1887, Brannan returned to San Francisco for a visit. He was sought out by local newspaper reporters who asked him about old landmarks, and he told his story to a new generation of San Franciscans. One of the reports told that Brannan was progressing well on a history of California which would be published after his death. The book had been in the planning stages for some time, and a year earlier, he told Jesse Little that he was thinking of writing such a volume. Brannan claimed to be "the only man living that can write it correctly."  

1 San Francisco Morning Call, November 1, 1887, reprinted in the Sacramento Record-Union, November 2, 1887.
2 San Francisco Morning Call, November 12, 1887.
3 Brannan to Little, January 13, 1886, Brannan papers.
By the end of 1887 Brannan had taken up residency in Escondido, just outside San Diego. It is difficult to get a clear picture of his activities there because of a lack of records.

Brannan went to California with very little financial backing. The Mexican lands had been surveyed, but title had not yet been given and they had not been divided or sold. During Brannan's stay in Nogales, William Brown, of the Chicago company, had advanced him twenty-five dollars a month for living expenses. This money was no longer being sent, and any money Brannan might have gained from his investments in Nogales would have been meager. It does appear that Brannan had a limited amount of capital to invest in Escondido, which may have come from Nogales or from his nephew, Alexander Badlam.

Perhaps the best description of Brannan during this period was contained in an interview printed in the Sacramento Bee in January, 1888. The reporter described him as:

An old man, upon whose steel-grey hairs and bent form the finger-marks of a long lifetime were deeply impressed, . . . His step was slow and feeble, . . . His appearance was no more interesting than that of any old farmer whose world is his ranch.4

The story Brannan told the reporter of his life had become, perhaps purposefully, distorted with time. He told a story of waking President James K. Polk in the middle of the night to get help for the voyage around the Horn in 1846. He termed stories that he had been a Mormon "simply poppycock." The reporter quoted him as saying that he was still in the Mexican

land business, but that he became tired of Mexico and so moved to San Diego. The report said that although he looked aged "his mind is as bright and it seems as full of vigor as it ever was."

Not only was Brannan still involved in the Mexican land business, but most of his correspondence and activities centered around it. In January, 1888, he received word that a dispute had arisen in the company, and the company thought Brannan could settle it. Brannan was told that he would be required to travel to Mexico City for the company. The trip was not as eagerly accepted as it would have been a few years before, but Brannan felt that the train trip would be worth the effort because he could make application for the twenty thousand acres of land the government was going to give him in addition to the surveyed lands. Brannan made preparations to leave and wrote to Jesse C. Little sending him maps of the Mexican mines in case anything happened to Brannan in Mexico. However, the maps Little received were not as valuable as they might have appeared. Brannan kept the "key" to the maps. The maps needed a surveying instrument to orient them, and a knowledge of where to start the survey. These Brannan did not give the Utahn. Brannan again told Jesse Little about how he had discovered the mines and told him that he was the only man who knew how to find the mines. Little wrote back to Brannan asking about safeguarding the "key" to the map. Brannan replied that he could trust it to no one, not even his son. The only way he would relinquish it would be if Little could find someone to finance the mines and arrangements could be made
made before he left for Mexico.\textsuperscript{5}

The coming of winter, 1888, gave Brannan more free time. Part of this time was spent in preparing for the Mexican trip, and part of it was spent in writing chatty letters to Jesse C. Little and others. Again this year the chief topic was Mormonism, but he also wrote about politics and foreign affairs. His views on Mormonism and polygamy had changed little in the last year, and he said that the people of the United States would not accept any group who put allegiance to the church ahead of allegiance to the country. His Republican and nationalistic views had not dimmed with the years. He talked about the shipping canal being started in Nicaragua and said that it would mean the area's annexation to the United States. Brannan discussed many such subjects to fill the extra time the winter provided.\textsuperscript{6}

Spring came and found Brannan still planning to go to Mexico. The Chicago company was going to send a representative with him to the Mexican capital, but the representative was delayed in his departure which also delayed Brannan. The more Brannan thought about the Mexican lands, the less enthusiastic he became about them. This attitude, together with the news that Mexico was negotiating with some German bankers for a fifty million dollar loan, convinced Brannan that he should ask the government for money rather than land. If the loan

\textsuperscript{5}Brannan to Little, February 26, 1888, and March 13, 1888, Brannan papers.

\textsuperscript{6}Brannan to Little, December 24, 1887, January 23, 1888, and February 6, 1888, Brannan papers.
were approved, he said that he would be "compelled to go by hook or by crook the coming summer and settle with the Mex. Gov." Brannan was not thinking of trading his share of the company land for cash, but the additional two hundred thousand acres the Mexicans had promised him. He also became less enthusiastic about personally developing the mines and wrote Jesse Little:

I wish to God that you could find a man that could take the whole thing off my hands. . . . It is not a safe journey for me to undertake, on account of my peralasis (sic), . . . it is perfectly safe now from Indians . . . and as old Cellers would say: "There is millions in it" for some body. My work is going to be confined here, and my days of hard labor I hope are over.  

When Brannan talked of his days of hard labor being over, he did not refer to a life of inactivity, and as he waited for word from the company about the trip to Mexico and the Mexican lands, he explored with his usual enthusiasm various speculative projects. In the early spring he purchased a coal mine twenty miles north of San Diego, and land which contained a good site for a town and a store. Like many of the early land speculators, Brannan was especially interested in finding the best places for cities and controlling the trade of the new community. Combining, as he had so well earlier in Sacramento and San Francisco, land speculation and commerce, Brannan felt that the land around it would quickly fill up. He saw the need of additional capital and wrote to Jesse Little asking him if he knew of someone with five to eight thousand dollars to invest in the enterprise. 

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7 Brannan to Little, March 13, 1888, Brannan papers.
8 Ibid.
9 Brannan to Little, March 22, 1888, Brannan papers.
Brannan's printed stationery claimed that he was a dealer in real estate, but it is questionable how much he earned in the sale of lands. He was handicapped not only by a lack of funds, but also by a poor market. He wrote to his nephew that the market was "flat" and would be for two or three years, but optimistically he felt that there was a bottom to the prices and great fortunes still to be made in it. Apparently Brannan either looked into the possibility of opening a shirt factory or actually started such a venture. In one of his letters to his nephew he wrote that:

The shirt business in this town is played out, I tryed (sic) your plan and every other plan, but the shirt makers & Chinan (sic) will not do do (sic) it, women are too high grade, and see no money in it.10

Brannan continued to send reports on the progress of the Mexican lands, but a change came in his attitude. Most of Brannan's earlier speculations and most of his earlier plans dealing with the Mexican lands were involved with gaining large tracts of land and then subdividing it or developing it. He now began to talk more and more about the advantages of selling it as a block. If he did not sell it as a block, he felt he would have to do the dividing, and it would require traveling over the land which he would not do "for the whole of it." It would take two months and probably kill him—he would give it away first.11 The sale of the land and the price it would bring could be influenced greatly by a railroad that

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10 Brannan to Badlam, May 13, 1888, Badlam papers.

11 Brannan to Badlam, May 24, 1888, Badlam papers.
was being built from San Diego to Fort Yuma. When the road was finished, Brannan saw no difficulty in selling the land at a good price.

The company issued stock certificates even though it did not yet have title to the land. Brannan did not receive his certificates because he owed the company money. When the money was paid, the stock certificates would be issued. Brannan owed William H. A. Brown eight hundred and fifty dollars from the twenty-five dollars a month Brown had sent him to live on while he was in Arizona. Brown held one share (one-fortieth of the land) as security on the debt. Brannan instructed Brown to sell one of the shares for eight thousand dollars and pay the debt from the sale. The company land was divided into forty shares, and Brannan was to receive five of them. However, he had paid one share for attorney fees, and the company promised to reimburse him, but Brannan was not sure they would. Even without this share, he still had claim on four-fortieths, or about one hundred and sixty thousand acres. The company made several attempts to sell the land, and negotiations were started with various groups, but none bought the land. Brannan reported that a French and German "cyndicate" (sic) was trying to buy all of the land. The company felt they could get a dollar an acre for the land, but that the price would rise to from one to three dollars an acre when the railroad was finished. The Chicago company continued to look for mineral deposits on the land, and Brannan told his nephew that Kruse was searching for his mines and was within
By September, Brannan had definitely decided to take money rather than land, if he could get it. He knew that such a change would require a trip to Mexico City, and he did not have enough money to make the trip. The company had worked out their problem without sending Brannan to Mexico, but the land division would not take place until January. Money for the trip might be available in January, but until that time there was little he could do but wait. Brannan wrote to J. C. Little saying that he was, "satisfied the land would be of no use to me, it will bring no money, and will be of no benefit to us." He continued that the citizens of the United States were opposed to settling under any other government and would not support a colonizing activity.

Brannan did not spend all his time seeking a return on the Mexican lands; he also became a farmer. He told Jesse Little that he was planting an orange orchard and wrote to Alexander Badlam asking him for some "smirney fig trees" and some "malago grape vines." Apparently he was successful as a farmer because in October, 1888, he told his nephew that he was "not orange hungry or Lemon Thirsty." How Brannan financed his farming operations is not clear, but at least part of the money came from his nephew, Alexander Badlam. In November, Badlam sent his uncle four hundred dollars which

12 Ibid.
13 Brannan to Little, September 25, 1888, Brannan papers.
14 Brannan to Badlam, November 16, 1888, Badlam papers.
Brannan assured him would last for a long time.

Brannan's health was failing, and in November he wrote that he could not swallow any solid substance. He thought it was just "flem," (sic) but said it was "d—d inconvenient when I go to eat."\(^{15}\) His nephew visited him in November, and in the next letter Brannan said that the morning after Badlam left he had the blues, which had never happened before.\(^{16}\) This is the last letter of Brannan's to be found. His letters to Jesse Little had grown less and less frequent, and his illness certainly curtailed his writing. Alexander Badlam's great grand daughter says that her ancestor went to Alaska,\(^{17}\) and the distance stopped their communication.

Much uncertainty exists about the last months of Brannan's life. Some authors have pictured Brannan as receiving almost fifty thousand dollars from the Mexican government.\(^{18}\) In view of Brannan's statements about the necessity of going to Mexico City to obtain the money, his condition just before becoming ill, and the property he had at the end of his life, this seems very unlikely. A claim more difficult to evaluate is that during the last months of his life he was nursed by Magdalena Moraga. Some have suggested that she came to

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\(^{15}\) Brannan to Badlam, November 16, 1888, Badlam papers.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) Telephone interview with Mrs. Watson Haarbauer, San Francisco, Badlam's great grand daughter, July, 1967.

Brannan's home to cook for him and care for him. Others say that she ran the boarding house in which he stayed. It is likely that someone did nurse Brannan during his illness, but also it appears that the situation has been highly over dramatized.

In May, 1889, Samuel Brannan died. His body laid in a vault for sixteen months until Alexander Badlam paid the costs and he was buried in the Mount Hope Cemetery, San Diego. The inventory of his property illustrated some of his activities. He held title to several pieces or mortgaged property, one cloth house (tent) in Escondido, two trunks containing "articles of no value," a large number of second hand books, a silver watch, some garden tools, and one hundred and sixty-four certificates (two thousand nine hundred shares) of stock in the Sonora City and Improvement Company.

The land probably reverted to the company to pay the money Brannan owed them. He had been given a certificate from the company guarantying him the stock if he paid the money within three years. The company did gain title to the land and owned it until at least 1900. In that year Francis T.

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21 Receipt to Alexander Badlam, October 27, 1890, for eighty dollars for funeral expenses of Samuel Brannan, Badlam papers.
22 "Inventory of Property of Samuel Brannan Deceased," Badlam papers.
23 The Sonora Land Company had an office in Chicago from
Wheeler died of a sickness he contracted while staying at his "castle" on these Mexican lands.²⁴

Brannan attempted to promote the lands in Mexico in the same ways he used so successfully in early California. However, because of circumstances beyond his control, he was never able to exercise the influence in Mexico that he had in California. The delays in gaining title to the lands, the problems of getting all the financial backing he wanted, the reluctance of Americans to settle on Mexican lands, the Indian revolts, and Brannan's age all proved to be obstacles which stopped him from fulfilling his dream. However, Brannan's activities do show the problems in foreign speculation and give insights into the life of this important western figure. It is also interesting to note how much Brannan was able to gain from his initial investment of thirty thousand dollars in Mexican bonds.

It is true that Brannan, who had once been the richest man in California, died in poverty, and yet, if it were the proper realm of the historian to write what might have been, the last months of Brannan's life would be an excellent place to start. He stood on the threshold of reaping the benefits of nine years labor in the Mexican lands. On paper he owned a great deal, but still died with very little.


²⁴Chicago Tribune, June 28, 1900.
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Receipt for two hundred and fifty dollars from Samuel Brannan to Jesse Little in the possession of Mrs. Franklin Walton, Centerville, Utah.


SAMUEL BRANNAN
SPECULATOR IN MEXICAN LANDS

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
W. Ray Luce
August, 1968
ABSTRACT

Samuel Brannan has almost become a legend in the history of the American West. Having led a group of Mormons around the Horn to California in 1846, he became a business and political leader in early California. He gained great wealth in speculation and merchandising, and is noted for his activities in the Vigilance Committee of 1851, his part in heralding the gold rush, and his developments in Calistoga and elsewhere.

Although much has been written about Brannan, very little of it deals with the last years of his life. Very little factual information has been available on his activities during this period. These last ten years of his life are the focal point of this thesis. A large number of letters written by Brannan during this period have recently been found and with various secondary sources have shed light on his activities during these years.

During the Maximilian interlude in Mexico Brannan helped a Mexican agent in the United States, General Gaspar Ochoa, issue a number of bonds in California to aide the Mexican war effort. These bonds did not sell as well as expected, and Brannan was given the bonds to hold until the Mexicans paid him the money he had spent issuing them. The Mexicans paid the debt over a period of years and redeemed the
bonds as they did so. By 1870, Brannan still held $500,000 worth of unredeemed bonds and decided to ask the Mexican government for land rather than money.

Brannan was given a land grant in Northern Sonora, but failed to comply with the requirements Mexico placed on the grant, and it reverted to the Mexican government. Brannan applied for another grant and was finally given it, but he was stricken first with a stroke which partially paralyzed him and then by yellow fever. These stopped the second grant. Brannan then moved to Nogales, Arizona Territory, and tried for another grant. A third grant was finally given, with a provision allowing him to survey most of the public lands in Northern Sonora for one-third of the land mapped. Outside capital for the venture was obtained when a group of Chicago businessmen organized the Sonora Land Company. With their backing, the surveying of the land began, and was completed after many obstacles.

With the finishing of the survey, Brannan moved to Escondido, just outside San Diego, California, and waited for the profits from his share of the land. Problems concerned with the distribution of the land arose and were not solved until after Brannan's death. He apparently did not receive the rewards of his nine years in the enterprise, dying in poverty in May, 1889.

Brannan attempted to do in Mexico what he had done earlier in California. But circumstances, many of them beyond his control, stopped him from exerting the same kind of influence and power in Mexico that he had possessed in California.
This abstract, by W. Ray Luce, is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

July 17, 1968
Date

Chairman, Advisory Committee

Member, Advisory Committee

Chairman, Major Department