

FEATHER RIVER CALIFORNIA TEMPLE HISTORY – TIMELINE

FIRST MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS TO SETTLE IN CALIFORNIA

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (nick-named Mormons by their persecutors) were among groups of Americans establishing settlements in Mexican Alta California during the 1840's. The first arrived in 1845 shortly before gold was discovered.



*October 1845 - William Brown Ide arrived in the American River Valley, leading a group of about fifty families from Ohio. At that time rumors were circulating that the Mexican military was planning to drive out all Americans at any cost. Ide and other Americans captured the military fort at Sonoma to protect their lives and land rights. No shots were fired. Ide then led the group to the home of General Mariano Vallejo who offered no resistance. According to historical accounts, it

appears that he was in favor of the take over as he had been ignored by Mexico City for some time and was even paying his military men with his own money. Ide drew up articles to form the Republic of California and the group posted their own flag on which they had drawn a star and grizzly bear. This action became known as the Bear Flag Revolt. Ide became President of the new republic which only lasted a short while. By July 1846, war with Mexico broke out and US military troops posted the American flag in Monterey and Yerba Buena

After the Mexican American War, Ide returned to his home near Red Bluff, California, where he lived until he died of smallpox in 1852.



*31 July 1846 - The ship Brooklyn arrived in Yerba Buena (San Francisco) with 238 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They were led by Samuel Brannan. The typical migration pattern of members of the Church to the west was by an overland route to Utah, but these Saints from the Northeastern United States choose a different way. They left their farms and homes in the East seeking a place to practice their religion without interference. Their voyage was a harrowing six-month, 24,000 mile journey that started on February 4, 1846 at New York City. They travelled around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America, stopping briefly in Chile and Hawaii before arriving in California. Eleven passengers died during the voyage. These members of the Church were the first large group of American colonists to arrive in California by water. Because they arrived a year before the main body of pioneers reached Utah, this new colony they

founded and named San Francisco, was the first city in the American West colonized by members of the Church.

The Pioneers found Yerba Buena to be a small ramshackle village with a few Californios and some native Indians. The settlers brought with them seeds, plow carts, a blacksmith forge, flourmills, books, paper, and a printing press. They immediately went to work building and planting. They started the first bank, school and library. There were lawyers, doctors, farmers, and seamstresses. Samuel Brannan started the first English newspaper, "The California Star". San Francisco quickly became a thriving town and later a great city.

*1846 – The colony of New Hope, also founded by members of the Church, was located on the Stanislaus River in central California. It was established by twelve families that had arrived on the Brooklyn. They planted wheat, built homes and a gristmill.

*January 1847 - 340 men of the Mormon Battalion reach southern California. The story of the Battalion began with the Saints being desperate for cash. Having been driven from Nauvoo in the cold winter, many were sick and destitute. Church leaders tried to obtain assistance from the government for either help to emigrate, or to find employment in the west. This led to a request for 500 volunteers to serve in a battalion to march to California. They were enlisted into service on 16 July 1846 for a period of twelve months. The men of the Battalion sent their uniform allowance back to their families to fund their move west.

Hostilities related to the Mexican War had barely ended when the Battalion arrived in California. By 10 January 1847, the American flag was flying in Los Angeles. From this time, the duties of the Battalion were not primarily military, but were mainly involved in building, digging wells, blacksmithing, repairing carts and all else that they could do to benefit the citizens.

As the end of their enlistment grew near, they were encouraged to reenlist. Most were anxious to be discharged and reunite with their families. Eighty-one choose to remain. They were assigned to duty in San Diego. The majority of the discharged chose to go to Northern California to find work in San Francisco or at Sutter's Fort before rejoining their families. Captain Sutter hired about fifty-six of

them to build a gristmill on the American River, and a sawmill at Coloma nearly forty miles upstream.

GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALIFORNIA

*24 January 1848 - Gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill. Six members of the Mormon Battalion were present at the Mill when the first gold was found. In fact, it is the journal of Mormon Battalion veteran Henry W Bigler that historians use to set the date for the initial discovery of gold in California. Many Battalion members became involved in the search for gold. Some of the Mormon miners took an estimated twenty to thirty thousand dollars in gold to Salt Lake City, providing a substantial boost to their economy about the time the Saints were arriving there.

*Mid 1850's - Missionary work began in California

*1857 - Northern California mission was closed. All members of the Church in California were asked to come to Utah in order to defend Church headquarters against the efforts of the US Army to establish martial law there. About 3,000 living in Northern California and 2,000 living in the San Bernardino Colony in Southern California, left for Utah. They gave up homes, farms and businesses. As the crisis passed in Utah, many families began returning to California.

CHURCH GROWTH IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

*1892 – The policy of encouraging members of the Church to gather to Zion in the Utah Valley ended in 1890. This gave approval for the Saints to live in California. In 1892, Luther Dalton reopened the California mission in Oakland with jurisdiction over all of California. Later that year a little branch was established in Sacramento with Aaron Garlick as President.

*1902 -In the 1800's, farmers in the area around Gridley, California grew wheat, oats and barley. The land was rich but had inadequate water for other crops. The California Irrigated Land Company proposed a canal system in the Gridley area that would bring water from the Feather River to the Gridley area to enable diversified farming. Large land holdings were divided into irrigated farms of ten,

twenty or forty acres. They predicted that many small farmers would move to the area, and the rich soil with water would lead to one of the richest sections to farm in the world. In 1905, the project was completed. The developers encouraged Latter-day Saints to move into the area because of their knowledge of irrigation systems. Advertisements went out to Nevada, Idaho, Utah and the Middle West. Families came to the area and successfully established crops in the temperate climate and rich soil of the valley.



First Group of Mormons to Arrive in Gridley

Picture taken in the park by the railroad station.

22 November 1906

Back row - Henry Losser, O.T. Shirley, Samuel Smith.

Sitting - Charles L. French, Hyrum Dewsnup, Waco Simmons, George Cole, James Cole.

Front row - Vandy French, Luis Cole, Arthur Cole.

*13 April 1906 – A group of Mormons from Utah arrived to look over the irrigated lands. At the time water rights in Utah were \$25/acre plus \$2.50/acre rental. Gridley prices were \$1.00/acre. Irrigated farming at a modest cost led many farmers and their families to settle the area.

*Autumn 1906 Hyrum Dewsnap, Charles French, Samuel Smith, O.T. Shirley, Henry Losse, Matthew White, W. Simmons and the George Cole family arrive in Gridley from Rexburg, Idaho. Impressed by the diversity of crops they returned to Idaho and encouraged family and friends to move. They arrived 22 November 1906. By March there were 150 Saints living in Gridley.

*10 December 1906 - First Sacrament meeting in Gridley, California

*24 February 1907 - Gridley branch organized with George Cole as branch President

*March 1907 – Gridley faced a huge problem when the area flooded. But the population continued to grow and by 1908 there were 500 LDS members.

*4 July 1909 - Social Hall built in Gridley, California. It was the first Church owned building in California.



*1912 - Chapel completed in the city of Gridley. The building was made to seat 1000 people and was the largest house of worship west of Salt Lake City. The Branch now consisted of 600-700 members.



*1 January 1920 - Second Gridley branch was organized in Gridley, CA with Joseph Davis as President.

12 November 1924 – Another group of Saints arrived in Gridley, this time from Metropolis, Nevada. Robert Fife relates in his journal that William Fife had lived in Metropolis for twelve years and all his crops were growing well. Then in July of 1924 the crops froze, and he announced he had had it. He hopped a train and headed to California in search of a better location for his family. The train arrived in Marysville. William had intended to go to Los Angeles, but the area was so beautiful that he decided to get off the train. He contacted realtors and asked about Mormons in the area and they told him about Gridley. He went there and fruit was everywhere—it was a land of plenty. He bought land there and walked away from his land and house in Nevada. Every year William would take produce back to Nevada to entice friends to move. He encouraged eighteen families to join him in Gridley.

*1930 - Nine districts established in California: Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Gridley, San Bernadino, San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose.

*4 November 1934 - Gridley Stake organized. There were 1498 people in the Stake on that day.

*4 November 1934 - Sacramento Stake organized

*1954 – Sacramento North Stake organized

- *1960 - Redding Stake organized
- *1970 - Roseville Stake organized
- *1972 - Chico Stake organized
- *1979 - Anderson Stake organized
- *1979 - Yuba City Stake organized
- *1980 - Citrus Heights Stake organized
- *1980 - Davis Stake organized
- *1988 - Antelope Stake organized
- *1992 - Rocklin Stake organized
- *2011 – Lincoln Stake organized
- *7 October 2018 – President Russell M. Nelson announces plan to build a Yuba City temple

REFERENCES:

California Saints, A 150-Year Legacy in the Golden State. Richard O. Cowan and William E. Homer. 1996.

History of the LDS Church Gridley, California area. 1906-1980. Compiled by the Reunion Committee, June 1980.

Mormon Historical Studies Journal, Roger Ekins. Article on William B Ide.

www.oaklandtemple.org/about