

NOTES ON SAN JUAN MISSION  
BY KUMEN JONES  
From his Journal.

Part I. Exploration.

At the suggestion of Apostle Erastus Snow, himself a pioneer statesman, colonizer and patriot, whose prophetic vision pierced the future, the decision was reached of planting a colony somewhere in the neighborhood of the "four corners" where the Territories of Utah, Arizona and New Mexico and the State of Colorado cornered together. This was at a Stake or District Conference held at St. George in the latter part of the year 1878, and at a Stake Conference held at Parowan Iron Co. Utah about 27th day of Dec. 1878.

The CALL FROM PAROWAN 1878.

A number of young men were called to explore this part of the country with that aim in view under the direction and leadership of Silas S. Smith, (of Paragonah Iron Co. Utah) who proved to be a prudent, wise resourceful man, particularly well equipped by nature and experience for a leader in that undertaking.

COMPANY STARTED Apr. 15, 1879.

After a little more than three months preparation, on the 15th day of April 1879, a start was made by the Iron Co. boys consisting of the following: From Paragoonah: Silas S. Smith, Capt Silas S. Jr, John A. Jesse T. Stephen A. and Albert Smith, all sons of the leader;

From Cedar: Robert Bullock, John C. Duncan, John Gower, Thomas Bladen, George Perry, George Urie, Kumen Jones, H.J. Nielsen James L. Davis and family. From Parowan: Harrison H. Harriman and family, George Hobbs, James B. Decker, Isaac Allan, Adelbert McGregor, Hanson Payles, F.R. Butt, Zachariah Decker, Nelson Dalley, John C. Dalton. Following up sometime later were John

Butter from Panguitch, Hamilton Thomson from Pinto Creek joined the party on the San Juan River.

THE ROUTE. The company leaving Paragonah traveled up Little Creek Canyon, down Bear Creek, up the Sevier thru Panguitch past Upper Canab thru Johnson's past the north end of Buckskin Mts, to Lee's Ferry on the Colorado River, crossing said river May 1, and on the main Arizona road to Moencopy (afterwards named Tuby City) company laying over at this point, sending out exploring party to find a way across the Navajo Reservation to the San Juan River (that being the objective point). This party was made up of the following Robert Bullock, K. Jones, Nathen Tanner with Thales H. Haskell as interpreter. This party followed up the Moencopy wash, out to Red Lakes, over Marshes Pass by the head of Lagoona Creek, by Kayenta, crossed the Chinalee about 35 miles from river and on to the San Juan river, following <sup>in</sup> the main a northeasterly direction and coming on the river at the Brewer Bottom, about 4 miles below the mouth of McElmo Creek and about the same distance above the Montezuma wash.

Soon after passing Chinalee Creek, one of the party, Kumen Jones was set back, to bring up the company who had remained at Moencopy, where they had been royally treated by John W. Young and others of that village.

#### CAPT. SMITH'S LEADERSHIP SHOWN.

It soon became apparant that water was going to be the source of our greatest anxiety and wherever we found a damp place, shovels and spades etc. were soon brought out and digging for water commenced, and as a rule plenty of water was soon secured,



which fact was easily used to our advantage with the quick-witted Navajoes, as they were told that the watering places would be theirs as soon as we passed on. This news was soon spread, and the Indians ahead were anxious and gave us a hearty welcome, occasionally bringing a mutton out to show their appreciation. It may be added here that some of the watering places developed by the company have been used until the present, as permanent water holes. An incident occurred, before reaching the Chinalee also showing the tact of our captain,. Upon passing a large camp or village of Pahutes, one of their number (an old man afterwards known among the settlers here as Peeagament) came blustering out and demanded \$500.00 before the train would be allowed to proceed thru his country. The captain being the first team, a short stop was made to try to pacify the old fellow, a few mild explanations were attempted, the only effect being to cause the old man to press his demands in a higher key. Nothing this Smith ordered him out of the way and proceeding a short distance struck camp for dinner. The Captain quietly passed the word around camp that it would be the right thing to give the Indians a little something to eat, or other small gift such as tobacco, etc (Especially the small children something to eat) but no one was to give the noisy old fellow anything or notice him in any way. The result soon made the wisdom of this course apparent, as the Indians old and young were jolly and friendly, and the old man was a psychological study, thoroughly whipped. The lesson seemed to last him all the rest of his life.

Barring the above, our travels thru the Reservation were agreeable and pleasant on both sides; reaching the San Juan on the last day of May and crossing the next day.

During the following two months, exploring parties were out in all point of the compass and those who were left at camp were kept busy making roads, taking up claims, working on a dam (that was being put in the river by a family named Mitchell) whom we found on the river on our arrival, having come from Colorado the year previous.

Aug. 13, 1879 Start for Home. Orders came from the Captain for a start to be made for home, by way of Salina, Colorado road or trail, a part of the company, including the captain, remaining on the river, awaiting mail of importance to the expedition, that was expected from Apostle Anastus Snow.

A start was made and road-making was again the "order of business" following the recapture wash about 25 miles, leaving Recapture and following up Mustang Mesa to the foot of the Blue Mountains, thence going around east base of the Blue and making a camp at what afterwards became known as the Carlisle Ranch, and just recently purchased by Redd, Perkins, Adams, Dalton, Co. At that date this was the most beautiful and promising location, that had been found since leaving Iron Co. Many tons of excellent hay could have been cut. Deer, sage hens, jack rabbits, cotton tails were plentiful.

After the arrival of the captain and party, another start was made, and at this point, an opportunity was afforded us of finding out how much difference there may be sometimes in men's opinions. The three scouts who had been ahead reported as follows:

1. It would be practically IMPOSSIBLE to make any kind of a wagon road down Peter's Hill.
2. In one month there could be a way worked so that the company could get down the hill.



3. In five or six days a way could be worked so as to let us pass down the hill.

After some counseling, it was decided to tackle the "Peter's Hill" proposition and next morning all hands went to work, and by night rocks were moved, trees were cut and a few dug-ways were made, so that the next day the Company not only passed down the hill but made 20 miles on the homeward journey.

Passing down thru Dry Valley, the old Saline Trail was struck at Coyote Wash, Our route from this point passed thru little Grand Valley (where Moab now stands) crossing Grand and Greene Rivers, thru Castle Valley, over the Mt. range and down Salina Canyon into Sevier Valley, over the range into Beaver Valley and in to parowan valley, reaching our homes Sept. 16 and 17th.

#### DISTANCE TRAVELED AND RESULTS.

In direct travel the party had made 900 miles not counting side trips, explorations, etc., had made 275 miles of new road, had thoroughly explored the country and formed pleasant relations with all Indians and white men whom we met on the way; order and discipline (both military--partially-- and church) were maintained, as well as kind and friendly feelings which almost always prevailed the whole camp all the way thru. Religious devotions were attended night and morning by the whole camp, or in groups when the camp was separated for any purpose; observance of sabbath was maintained by resting and "cleaning up" and for the benefit of those who maintained camp on the River, a Sunday School was organized; the Fourth and Twenty-fourth of July were fittingly observed, with programs, sports etc., which were participated in and royally enjoyed by all members of the camp as well as visitors from Mitchell's Ranch and straggling Indians who enjoyed

the artillery part of the program.

The humble writer of these early incidents of the early history of the San Juan Mission, wishes right here with uncovered head, to render honor and praise to the memory of Silas S. Smith, who so wisely and faithfully managed and in such a quiet wise way acquitted himself in the responsible position that had been placed upon him by the Authorities of the "Mormon" church, proving very conclusively that no mistake had been made in his being called to that important position.

#### CHARACTER SKETCH OF SILAS S SMITH

Silas S. Smith as I knew him as as I sized up an old man from the beginning of our acquaintance (being myself but an inexperienced uneducated back-woods young fellow) after fifty years, I find that my first impressions are fully justified.

He was quiet, unassuming, careful and resourceful. There was nothing flashy about him, but when the occasion required there was a real man behind it all, in case he knew he was right fear was the last thing he thought of, if he thought of it at all. His rich and full experience along so many lines prepared him to meet almost any problem and emergency.

He had a good full understanding of the Gospel, well up on financial matters, practiced economy and thrift, was true to the Church and loyal to the Authorities of the Church and State and country. He had filled places of responsibility in church and state, passed thru the early Utah Indian troubles, thereby acquiring experience, that proved an asset to the San Juan pioneers, surrounded on all sides as we were by Utes, Pahutes, Navajos etc., not always friendly and isolated from all other

San Juan Mission  
Jones.  
Tribute to S.S.S.

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white settlements and it was soon discovered that the outlaws and renegades from all Indian tribes made this their headquarters the very rough broken nature of so much of the country, offering an excellent hiding place secure from pursuit.

Our dealings and contact with the Indians, in our early pioneering days followed the wise, friendly, fair policy introduced by Silas S. Smith as the leading spirit, with Thales H. Haskell as interpreter and contact man, both past masters in their places, with both of whom I enjoyed the most friendly association, and to whom I am indebted for the humble measure of success I attained in assisting in maintaining friendly relations with these descendants of the prophet Lehi and other Book of Mormon character.

From Journal of Kumen Jones of Blanding Utah. p 1-5.  
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