

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE

47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

October 20, 1950

Mr. George L. Higginson,
Santsquin, Utah.

Dear Brother Higginson:

Thank you for your note which came some time ago.

I am enclosing herewith some excerpts from an article or history written by George B. Higginson back in 1892, which I am sure you will find of interest.

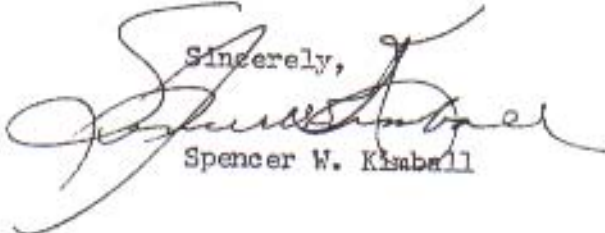
I have the original written in George B. Higginson's handwriting which I had hoped to turn over to the Historian's Office, and some time when you are in Salt Lake you will probably be interested in looking it through and reading it in full.

When you advised that you can find no records or papers I remember now that in this statement he said he had to destroy his records in order to protect Brother Parley P. Pratt.

We hope this statement will be of interest to you.

With kind wishes.

Sincerely,


Spencer W. Kibball

SNK/m
enc

The 1st Chief of the Chickasaw Nation, named Winchester Colbert, a fine educated man, was nearly blind with inflamed eyes. He had not, so he said, slept 2 hours per night for 5 years. Myself and Cook administered to him. I anointed his eyes, and Bro. Cook was mouth in rebuking the disease. He soon retired to bed and went to sleeping and next morning arose from his slumbers with his eyes perfectly healed. This miracle soon spread, and he invited us to make his house our future home whenever we felt inclined, but still none of them obeyed the gospel. I will further desist from quoting miracles, they were so numerous. One more I will state this is in connection with myself. Myself and Elder Cook had been staying with a man by the name of Joseph Knebb. We had been doing some carpentering for him. (This we had to do to get our clothing.) During the time we stayed there working and preaching to the natives every Sunday I was taken sick with the dumb chills and 48 hours fever. This was a terrific blow to me. For 8 days I ate nothing, but drank from 12 to 16 gallons of water per 24 hours. I was terribly reduced in person and Bro. Cook was getting alarmed on account of my sickness. He was down in the garden looking to see if he could find something that I could presume to eat. During his absence I left the chair I was sitting in and lay down on the bed. Immediately after lying down I felt the destroyer take hold of me. I became benumbed all over and I realized what was coming on to me. I made an effort to get off the bed but my legs refused to answer to the call. They were dead and stiff. I sat upon the bed and loudly exclaimed, "Mr. Lucifer, you are not going to destroy me this time, I'll inform you." After this exclamation I made an effort and fell on to the floor and dragged myself on to the porch in front of the house and called for help. Mrs. Knebb came and saw my situation and ran for Elder Cook. He came running for dear life and soon administered to me and death was stayed and departed from my system and from that time I commenced to get well, although very weak. During my sickness which was during the month of September, we were called upon to leave the Choctaws and as I have before stated, return to the Cherokees. As soon as I was able we made an effort to leave. I saddled my horse, one I had worked for and Elder Cook hitched on to his buggy. This was in October AD 1856. We intended to go that night to Edw. Knebb's, a distance of about 8 miles. Before we got there Bro. Cook's horse was taken seriously sick with a fever and it was with difficulty we reached Edward Knebb. He waited 3 or 4 days to see if the horse would recover. This it did not do, so that it was possible to travel with him. We counseled together and concluded I had better go on and Bro. Cook would stay with the Choctaws until his horse was well. Consequently he had to stay all that Fall and most of the Winter.

I arrived in about a week from the time I left the Choctaws, on Rois Creek, Bro. Miller's headquarters in the Cherokee nation. I found Bro. Eyring and Bro. Case there, both sick with the ague and fever. Bro. Miller was out on the Verdigrée River and also Bro. Richards. They had baptized Jack Randall, a Muskogee King, and all his family and subjects. This was quite an addition to the church. Bro. Miller had received notice from the U.S. Indian Agent for the Cherokee nation to leave the nation within some given date. This he did and took Bro. Case with him, and they started for Potawatamie, to there remain the balance of the winter. The Presidency of the mission fell on to Bro. Washington N. Cook, of which he was duly notified, and hastened to our headquarters to some town on the Verdigrée River and took charge of this mission and presided until he died.

During this winter I stayed with a Creole by the name of Riley Perryman. He was rich and we were well treated. We kept on preaching to the Creeks and Cherokees, and we baptized several. Spring opens up here in the early days of March and the weather gets very warm and every kind of tree and vegetation blooms out and all is lovely and we all began to feel like traveling more extensively and holding meetings all through these nations, until our April Conference. This was the spring of AD 1857.

In the early part of March, I in connection with some native Elders and sisters, started up the Verdigrée one Saturday. I was going to preach a funeral sermon on the death of a brother named Prince Perryman. They went with me to hear and for company. About noon or after we came to A Pretty Little Spring Creek, with plenty of pretty shade trees and an abundance of fine green grass, so we concluded to stop and turn our horses to feed and take a lunch of jerked beef and venison and biscuits, and after resting for an hour and a half, we concluded to travel on. We saddled up and mounted when suddenly a white man on horseback was seen coming towards us quite lively. The native brethren said he looked like a U.S. Marshall, and the supposition was that he was after myself to take me and turn me out of the nations for preaching the gospel, as some Methodist ministers had threatened to have me turned out. We rode right along, the brethren declaring if he proved to be a marshall he should not take me unless I said so. By this time he was up with us, and steered his course for me. I then began to think he was a marshall. He very politely said "How do you do", asked me if my name was Higginson. I replied in the affirmative. He then asked me to ride with him a short distance ahead of the company as he had some business with me. Then I, feeling certain that he was a marshall, refused to go unless he told me who he was. He rode near to me and whispered to me "Parley P. Pratt". He was in disguise and I almost doubted his statement. He then produced a letter that I had written to Elder J. H. Hart in St. Louis, and asked me if I recognized that handwriting. I answered in the affirmative, and asked him from whom he got possession of it. He said, "From Bro. Hart and Bro. Erastus Snow in St. Louis." We rode ahead and he informed me he was flying from death and was seeking shelter in these nations and requested me to assist him. I told him he only had to command me, I would do anything I possibly could for him. We preached the funeral sermon in the morning of Bro. Perryman, and after dinner, myself and Parley took a walk and he informed me of the circumstances that had caused his flight, and of the other things that had transpired in connection with it, that I was not to make known until such time as he saw fit to reveal it. I, of course, so promised, and kept my vow. The next day I took Bro. Pratt about 12 miles higher up the River Verdigrée to Bro. Joseph Burgess's who had a nice home on the edge of a large prairie, and was quite secluded (as Bro. Pratt so desired.) He was kindly received and welcomed by both Bro. Burgess and wife. I according to his instructions introduced him as Elder Parker from New York. He stayed there until the 6th of April when he came down to our conference which we held at the house of Sister Randall in Sand Town. Her husband, Jack Randall, was now dead, and in losing Jack the Elders and mission lost their best friend. He died strong in the faith of the gospel, and bore a faithful testimony before dying. Brother Pratt was introduced as Elder Parker to the natives. Of course the other Elders nearly all of them were acquainted with him. During our conference he requested me to go down to the frontiers of Texas and look for Mrs. McLean and convey some letters to her, and some to Homer Duncan, John Moddy and others who were Texas missionaries and were expected soon to arrive with the emigrant saints from Texas. I accordingly went as directed, but after traveling in that direction for 200 miles, I found through inquiring, that the Mormon Emigration from Texas was yet 300 miles South of my place of staying (on the North fork of the Canadian River.) I therefore, hastened back on the Arkansas River to see Parley and report my success and receive fresh instructions. The morning after my arrival at Fort Gibson, May 4, 1857, as near as I can remember from circumstances (for I was obliged to destroy my journal and all my papers to try and keep Parley out of trouble) I overtook Parley going out on the Texas Highway to try and hunt me up. Suffice to say that day both Parley and myself were arrested by a company of U.S. Cavalry. After this I was imprisoned with him, ate with and drank with him, slept with him, talked with him, was handcuffed with and to him and in like manner was dragged across the country from Fort Gibson to Van Buren, Arkansas, where I was mobbed with him, and where he was martyred for the Gospel's sake, and after his martyrdom I rode through the homes of the mobocrats and obtained possession of his corpse and buried it with a mob all around me at 10 o'clock of the night of the 14th of May, AD 1857, without the presence of a brother or sister.

In this matter I presume I ran as much, if not more, risk than did B.H. Roberts in the matter of the Tennessee martyrs, but I never received a kind word or any recognition for my service in that direction and it has been remarked "Died Parley as a fool dieth". Trusting this short synopsis will be acceptable, and if anything more is requisite in the premises and I am able to convey it, command me, and I will try and respond. And as ever I remain, Your Brother in the Gospel Covenant. /s/ George B. Higginson.

PS-After the death of Bro. Washington N. Cook, Bro. Henry Eyring was the Pres. of the mission until the spring of AD 1858. He was at that date called home, and the mission was to some extent abandoned altho there were many branches of the church then with rather worthless members