

The Historians Corner

EDITED BY JAMES B. ALLEN

One of the choice results of the organization of the Mormon History Association has been the opportunity for scholars from both the "Utah Church" and the "Reorganized Church" to get together and discuss their common historical heritage. The spring meeting of the Association on 15 April 1972 at Independence, Missouri, was one of the most productive such opportunities yet presented. On that day some 130 members and friends of the Association boarded buses and visited six important Mormon historical sites in northern Missouri, heard an outstanding scholar present a paper at each site, and attended a banquet in the evening. The idea for such a meeting came from the executive council of the Mormon History Association, and credit for the success of the day goes to F. Mark McKiernan, general chairman of the event, and Lyman Edwards, who was in charge of local arrangements.

The first site visited was Wayne Landing, where the Mormon exiles crossed the Missouri River as they were driven from Independence late in 1833. Here T. Edgar Lyon, associate director of the LDS Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah, reviewed the social and economic setting of the 1830s and the reasons for the tragic Mormon expulsion from Jackson County. The group then proceeded to Liberty Jail, where Leonard J. Arrington, LDS Church Historian, discussed the experiences of Joseph Smith and other Church leaders in that place. Warren A. Jennings, professor of history at Southwest Missouri State College in Springfield, then presented a paper at the Mormon temple site at Far West, which gave new insight into the political aspects of the Mormon experience in Missouri. The group then moved to Adam-Ondi-Ahman, where Robert J. Matthews, associate pro-

fessor of ancient scriptures at Brigham Young University, told of the special meaning of this spot in Mormon history.

When the tour arrived at the courthouse in Gallatin, Missouri, Reed C. Durham, Jr., director of the LDS Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah, told of the dramatic election-day struggle at that spot in 1838. The last site visited was Haun's Mill, the location of one of the most brutal massacres in the Missouri period of Mormon history. Here, amid a pouring rainstorm, the group listened to Alma R. Blair, associate professor of history at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa, give new insight into the background of that event. A banquet at Independence, Missouri, concluded the day. Davis Bitton, assistant LDS Church historian, summarized the significance of the day's activities, and Richard P. Howard, church historian of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, discussed early hymns in the Church and particularly the role of Emma Smith in compiling those hymns.

So enlightening and impressive were the activities of this day that the editor of *BYU Studies* felt it worthwhile to expand the Historians Corner and include all of the papers. In this way at least part of the excitement of the day can be shared with our readers. Dr. Bitton's summary has become an introduction, and only two of the papers are not included here. Events have transpired that necessitate further research on and rewriting of Warren Jennings' paper; it is scheduled to appear in a subsequent issue of *BYU Studies*, and Richard P. Howard's discussion has already been published elsewhere.