

MEMORIES OF IOWA:1851-1852
Allen D. LaBaron

Richard Britton and his wife Elizabeth Lee embraced Mormonism in the mid 1840s while living in Banbury, Oxfordshire, England. Also converted at that time were Elizabeth's parents and siblings.

In January of 1851, Richard and Elizabeth, along with Elizabeth's parents, emigrated to America, traveling from Liverpool to New Orleans on the ship George Washington Bourne. The 280 Saints aboard the ship were led by Elder William Gibson.

From New Orleans, the group traveled up river to St. Louis on the steamer Concordia, arriving there the middle of March. The Britton group remained in St. Louis until May when they continued on to Council Point, Iowa on the steamer Durock. Among their fellow passengers were Albert Carrington and Judge Perry E. Brocchus, one of the first federal appointees to the New Utah Territory. Carrington was accompanying the Judge and helping to bring a large brass cannon to the Territory. Brocchus is remembered as one of the three "run away judges," who quit their posts soon after arriving in Salt Lake City.

Following is an excerpt from the diary of Richard Britton covering the period when his family left St. Louis, lived in Iowa, and subsequently prepared for the journey to Salt Lake. His spelling and capitalization as near as it can be made out is retained. There is no punctuation.

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[In St. Louis]...one morning after Sister Harris had got well and strong has i was going to my work she followed me out of the house saying she wanted to ask me

a question i told her i was in a hurry she said she was going to Die both her and her husband and she wanted me to take Charge of orphan Children i said Sister Harris your Crasey you never looked Better in your life she said she never felt Better But she and her Husband was going to die i said i was going away in a Week but if she would Let the Matter Rest till I came home i would talk to her About it at Night When i got home She Began About she was going to Die and seemed very much Distresed i told her we was on the following thursday going up to Council Blufs But if she would write a letter and put it in the hands of Some Person for them to send to me at Cainsvil Post Office i would Come Back and fetch the Children and they should fare the same as my Children with this She was Satisfied After Settling my Busines on the next thursday we went on Board the Steamer Durock Bound for Council Blufs Sister Harris Went to the Boat with us and When the bell Rang for the Boat to Start the bell Rang two or three times Before they could Get her off the Boat i Shall never forget the Poor Woman while i live this was thursday noon and on Sunday at Eleven of Clock in morning She and her Infant Daughter was taken with the Cholera and Both Died and was Buried the same night at six oclock her oldest Boy was taken the next Wednesday and was Bured that Night her Husband was taken sick the next Sunday and he died and was Buried the same night Leaving one girl and one Boy these Children was taken By Brother and Sister Howel on this Steamer we the Brass Cannon that was coming to the Valley Judge Brockus had Charge of it Brother Albert Carrington was on the Boat the Packing was Bloun out of the Cilinder one Day while Raceing with another Boat this took three Days to Repair the Boat was tied up to a tree on the North Bank of the River some of the Company Went on Shore my self among the Others when about Three miles from the Boat in the Woods i Come across Judg Brockus fast

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ALLEN D. LABARON, a professor at Utah State University, lives in Logan, Utah. He is a descendant of Richard Britton. Excerpts of Britton's diary, including this fragment, have been in circulation among family members for over sixty years. The original diary is in private possession, however, a zerox copy of the diary has been donated to Brigham Young University special collections in Provo, Utah.

asleep on a large log his arms hanging each side the Log With his head thru Back and his Neck Bare i Could have Cut his head off in a few Seconds and if i had have known at that time What Afterwards learned in Salt Lake City he never Would have Cursed this City with his Presence has i should have Kiled him Right on that Log the Scoundrel unkown to Me Wanted to get my Wife to Leave her family on the sly and Cross the Plains with him i would Kill him now if i could Cross his Path at LevensWorth Landing he had the Brass Cannon Loaded Ramed full of hemp and Wet grass up to the muzzle it was Lashed Down to the fore Part of the Boat and a train of Powder Laid along the deck to the Vent and then a match when it Went off the Recoile Was so great that it Came near throwing the Boat on her Broad Side we got to the Landing at Council Point on the thirteenth of June Eighteen fifty one and While the Boat was Dischargeing Cargo i went and got Work with Brother Yates to tend thirteen acres of corn for one third of the crop i have many Days it was so hot that I have Puled off my Pants and worked in my shirt when i first Went to Work for this man i had Grocereys Enough to Last my family six or eight months including Sack of Rice Oatmeal Coffee tea Sugar soap and all other things accordingly and also hams shoulders and side meat But before i had Been there twenty four hours i had People Come to Beg for the Sick i kept on giving to all that come and to them that i lived With they Eat of my Stuf has long has it Lasted this Brother Yates had a son that was taken Sick my wife nursed him But he Died Curseing God with his last Breath i had got my Crops all Plowed and hoed and left to Ripen in the early Part of July we had a Tornado of Wind and Rain i was in the Corn when I first heard the Wind Boaring in the Distance i started for home and had just got in the house and Closed the Door when the wind struck the place the houses that was Caught with the doors open had thear Roofs Blown off one shed and wagon was carried clean over the Misourie River and Landed on the Other Side with out Damage to the Wagon by the End of July all my grocerys was Dealt out People come ten miles to beg for the Sick the Last of my money i paid for a Cow and Calf Seventeen Dollars she was a good one at the End of the first i had Been mowing in company with Brother John Yates and another man Whose name I do not Remember on the first Sunday in August on coming home from Meeting we for the first time had mush and milk it Seamed to me like eating sand i did not like it But i had to Eat it in order to get my family to eat it after a little my Oldest Daughter a Girl about ten years Old run out of the house she not coming Back i started out in Serch of her i found her Behind the Wheat stack

Sobing and Crying very much i asked her why she did not come and get her Dinner she said Diner Do you call it its more Sawdust than anything Else she said father you have Brought us from a good home to starve us to Death take us back and then if you want to come yourself you can come she Said Look at Brother Yates him and his family helped us Eat all We Brought With us and he has got a Big Pudding and Peice of Roast Pork for thear dinner Did he ask us Children to have a bit no he Did not take us from such People hearing a child talk so made me feel Bad has i knew she was Speaking the truth i at Last come to the conclusion to go Back and go to Cincinatta and there stop until i could get an outfit for the Plains i turned away to go to the house Very sad all of Suden a thought Crosed my mind that it was the Devil that was Putting this into my mind i said to my self i have a Right to know the mind and will of God in this matter and i will know i started off into the Wood and after looking arround to Se that no one was there I bowed Down Before the Lord and told him how i felt and what i thought of Doing and I asked to make Known his will to me in the matter and What Ever it Was i would do it i said i did not Want him to send an Angel to Me for i Should not know him from the Devil i did not want him to Give me Dreams or Visions for the Devil might give them to me has I was afraid of Being Deceived but if he the Lord Would give it in the Gift of tongues that that afternoon give one the tongue and a nother one the Interpretation in the meeting What ever he Wanted me to do i would do it after this i felt much Better i went home and took my Family to Meeting it was the Sacrament Meeting When the Saccrament was administerd and the meeting given into the hands of the Bretheren father Clark an Old man that had the Gift of tongues Got up and asked the President of he Should Speak in tongues he said he never felt the Power so Great before the President said Go a head father Clark i Gues we shall have the Interpretation the old Gentleman was speaking for a long time After he had Done there was an Old sister Whose name i have forgotten she was a Midwife and was about Eighty years Old she got up and said Brother Coulston i have got the interpretation for that tongue and what is more there in one in this Room Waiting for it She was on the Other Side of the House She Began Thus Saith the Lord there is a Person Present in this house that has been Enquireing of Me what my Will is Concerning them for the devil has Put it into thear heart to Go Back into Babylon But My Will is they shall not go back for thear Course lies onward and not Backward inasmuch as they Will not hearken to this my Voice But will go Back into Babylon they Shall not Live to reach thear Destination but in

asmuch as they Will go forward and obey this my Voice and Will Bare Patiently that Which is About to Come upon them Great shall Be thear Reward for i the Lord have Decreed Great Judgements to come upon the Land and upon the Waters inso much that all those who will not hearken into me Shall Dwell in Perpetual Desolation she then went on to speak of some City that the sea Would Leap its Bounds and Destroy but she being so feble in her speach i could not hear whear it was i have never had any Desire to leave this People from that time When the meeting was over and i was Going home a man and his wife come up to me thear name was Lane he was a tailor by trade She said She had not Been asking the Lord about going Back she was going back the Next thursday and she was not afraid But what she should Reach her destination they Was going first to Saint Jocephs and them Back to England they Came from Upton on Severn in WarciesterShire she wore the mans Breches But she Did not Reach her Destination for on the second day after the Boat Started she was Taken with the Cholera an Died and the Boat Run to the side of the River and they Burried her body there her Husband and son come to the Valley with the Texian Company Some time after and got Married to Morgan Phelps Divorced Wife and soon After his boy was Drowed in Jordan and he left her that Woman lost her life through her contempt of the Word of the Lord given to me in that Meeting But i shall never forget it But i little thought how soon the Promice of what was about to come upon me was going to begin which it Did the next Day Monday i went to the hay field this moring to load up hay with brother John Yeats and had Sent one Load home and when i had Eat my Diner i got a heap of hay to gather and Lay down on it when i Woke up i found i could not move but the pain was terrable i lay there unable to help My self in about an hour one of the Brethern Come by going after hay i caled to him and asked him to take me home he said Brother Yeates was unloading his hay when he came by and he would soon be coming back he said if Brother Yeats did not come until he had got his Load he would take me after a While Brother Yates Did Come got his load and took me home But i could not Rest night nor day the Place was so full of Devils in three Days after they Put me in a wagon and took me to a Place caled little Pigeon a Branch of the Church where my wifes father lived the Roads was rough and the man that Drove the team was Brute i was has sick as i could be with the fever and not able to hold to the side of the wagon When they got to where my Wifes was they carried me into the house and them left in a hurey the third Day me and my family was put into a house that had no windows and half a Door and the Roof you could se

the stars through it and the Logs was so far apart you could put your fist Between them i said the house had no windows it had the frames but no Sash or glass in this place i was put With out any help with nothing to eat but corn meal this i could not eat and my Wife and son was took sick with the feaver and there we Lay three days without food at length the President of the Branch come to se us he Did not know we was With out food he took my two children to his house four miles from where we was stoping and sent us two chickings and some potatoes being without food so long when we Eat it it made us worse and Brought on the Diarea Which lasted on me for months i also got the jaundice and Every kind of Sickness includeing the Dumb Ague Many a time i wished i could Die but the Lord had Ordered Other wise My Children had to go Doon to the Creck and to gather Drift wood to burn this was not so Bad so long has the Warm Wheather lasted but When the Winter set in it was honorable Dureing the first Six weekes of this Sickness my cow and Calf was trned out by Brother Yeates and was Running in the Woods at last my Brother inlaw took one of my Wifes fathers horses and brought them up one Evening my Oldest girl Went to look after my Cow and Being [un]Able to find it She stopt out late When Coming home she was atacked by three Wolves but her Cries Being heard by Brothe[r] White the Bishop of his Branch him and two more men Resscued her or they Would soom have killed her Soon after this my cow got her shoulder put out But it was Put Right again and Afterwards helped to haul my family to the valley and Gave milk all the way through and till the Next Christmas During the Winter We sufferd a Great Deal We had no one to help us the devil turned all our Relations against us they Would Pass the house on thear Way to Meeting and Would never Come to see if we was Dead or alive for a month Brother Benson having Came from the Valley to Gather the Saints from the Bluffs and to Preach Polligamy Brother Howell the President of the Branch came to my House to see What we had got that could Be Sold to help the Emegraton Not Being able to get out of bed i told him where the Keys of our Boxes was and Said if there is anything that can be used to help any one take it He opened the Boxes and looked over all We had when he had gone over them he put them all back locked Boxes and gave us the Keys and said God Bless you i will not take anything from you you are the only ones that have offered all you have for me to take What i Wished if any Body goes to the Valley you Shall One Day when I was somewhat better i Went to my Wifes Fathers on my Wy i Caled at my Brother inlaws house his wife was at home having Rested myself i Went the Ballance of the Way i had Not been there many minutes

Before my Sister in...and after i had stoped half an hour I started for home it was no more than one mile But it took two hours for me to go that Short Distance i was so Weak i could not go but a few yards Without stoping i had not been long at home about one hour When one of my children going to the Creek for water she came running back and said her aunts house was in flames i was seting at the table Eating some doger my Sisterinlaw said to Brother John Toone that i had set it on fire John Toone come to my house and told what they said i then sent to the President of the Branch and Demanded a trial When the investigation took Place it was Proved to be the cat that had been setting Close to the fire and some hot Embers and fallen onto her and sticking to her fur she had run under the Bed and set some Clothes on fire they Lost all thier fine Clothing that they Worshiped so much During the time Alfred Condor[Cordon] was at my house [back in England] it was one Cold snowy moring we was at Breakfast i heard a poor man lying in the street on going to the Door i saw a very genteel looking man beging his way to Manchester he was a Callico engraver i caled him in and set him Down to Breakfast when he had Done i gave him some food to help him on his way and a shilling to Pay for his Lodgins the Poor fellow seemed so thanful when he left the house i said that is a thing i will never do Brother Condon[Cordon] said nothing for a few minutes when he got up and said Brother Britton you have Drove a stake you have got to pull up three years from now you will come to this Very same circumstances this was a Propheicy that was fulfilled for Dureing the Winter that i lived at little Pegeon Branch Both me and my family Suffered for Want of the Common necesaries of Life When We left England We had Plenty of Clothing But this Winter at Council Bluffs Gobeled up all we had we was not abe to Get from our Bed sometimes in the night it Would Come on to Snow when it Would Come on to our Bed when the heat of our head Would Caus the Snow to thaw and afterwars Freese our hair to the Pillow our Children in the morning Would get up and have to Take our quilts and Shake the snow off and Sweep the floore some times they would have to go to the Creek to get some wood before we could get any fire and then it would be so wet it would not burne when we had any wood a Brother name was Mckenley Would cut enough to last us two Days for Which he Would charge me a fine Irish Linnen Shirt cost me ten shellings each when he had got all my shirts but two then he got a pair of my Wifes New Boots for the same ammount of Wood cuting When the boots and shoes failed then he Wanted our Blankets i found We was one Day in the Winter when i thought i could go has far as Council Point i got John

Goodman to take me in his wagon to go and see how much of my corn was saved when we Reached Hainsvill [Kanesville] they had to take me to Bishop Palmers house Where i had to stop Eight days has Every Body said i should surely Die Doctor Dunyon come there to see thear sich Child which Died he said i could not live i told him i Should live and go to the Valley the next summer Which came to pass but at that time i had no idea how or by What means we Should go not being able to look after my corn i lost all my corn hay and my share of the wheat there was only three men at Council Point Abele to get out of Doors the Result was everything was eat up or Destroyed by the Cattle the Crows and Blackbirds In the following Spring the Subject of how the Saints Was to go to the Valley the Brethern Could not sell thear Claims one Brother named Devenish he Traded his Claim for a large heavy Yoak of Cattle that the Emegrants had Worked from Indeanna and they sold them because they thought they Would be to heavy to Cross the Plains these Cattle was Loaned to me upon the following terms if they Died on the Road i was to pay for them if they come safe through and Did not sell for What they Cost him seventy five Dollars the amount he traded his Place to them for i was to pay the Ballance Brother Howell traded his Claim for an old Wagon without tonge or Bows With the tire Loos and the Axel tree Broken where the Bolt goes in it had Iron Arms that came near the Center of the wood this break in the Wood was held by a bar of very thin iron this Old wagon Was also loaned to me if i could fix it up having no money we had to trade any thing we could to get some money to buy Bows and tonge We traded some China and my Wife sold her jewellery some to Charles Bassett and with this we fixed up the Old wagon and got a few things for our journey over the Plaines we used our bed curtains to make a Cover for the Wagon We had not bread sufficient for the journey the quantity Required was one pound per Day for Each Person all i had was Three quarters of a pound per Day for each person and that consisted of fifty pounds of flour the ballance was corn meal of very inferiour quality at that the ballance of our provisions consisted of seventy Pounds of sugar and ten Cents worth of Whiskey this we never used But sold it again at Bridger this with about three pounds of Butter was what we had for a family of Six but our Cow gave Milk and Worked all the way