

George A. Smith, 26, 27 December 1850, Journal of George A. Smith President of the Iron County Mission, Commenced December 7th, 1850, George A. Smith papers, MS 1322, box 2, folder 5, Church History Library.

1. Apostle George A. Smith trades an ox for an Indian boy, December 26 and 27, 1850.¹

Document

Thursday Dec 26th

Extraordinary sever [sic] night. Thermometer stood this morning at ½ past 6 a.m. at 16° below zero. I went over the river² in company with Capt. Baker,³ found that 10 in condition to move. Capt. Baker gave notice to the camp to gather the cattle and prepare to move; several head were missing. I directed Capt. Fulmer⁴ in company with Thos. Wheeler⁵ and three others to visit an Indian camp, reported to be about four miles down the river. Soon after they left, Br. Henry Lunt came in reported a trail of cattle followed by Indians leading into the mountains, thinking there was some mistake, I sent three men to examine the track and soon returned with a report that there was a trail of two oxen driven by two Indians followed by Br. Henry Lunt alone armed with his rifle. I directed Lieut. Smith⁶ with 20 mounted men to follow the trail to recover the oxen if possible and bring the thieves in prisoners. Immediately after, a messenger arrived bringing the news that the oxen had been found and the Indians hid in the brush, that there was a good many tracks and apparently a large party of them. I accordingly sent a detachment of 20 men on foot under Lieut. Sheets⁷ to support the cavalry in case of an encounter in the brush. I

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² Sevier River.

³ Simon Baker (1811-1863).

⁴ Almon L. Fullmer (1816-1890).

⁵ Thomas Jefferson Wheeler (1832-1910).

⁶ James G. Bleak, a historian of the Southern Utah Mission, listed Peter A. Smith, Johnathan Smith, and Thomas S. Smith as members of the 1850 Iron County company. It is difficult to know to which "Smith" George A. Smith refers here. See James G. Bleak, "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission: 1850-1869, MS 318, box 1, folder 1, 8, CHL.

⁷ Elijah F. Sheets (1821-1904).

gave notice to the camp to provide wood and turn out the cattle and guard them as we should remain here until morning about one o'clock.

Brother Henry Lunt drove in my lead cattle on my family wagon; one of them had been shot in his right shoulder with two arrows. We thought on examination this might recover. The other one had been wounded with eleven arrows, the heads of two remained in him; there was little hopes of his recovery, yet we dressed his wounds with spirits of turpentine and salt. About 5 pm Lieut. Sheets returned with his company of men and reported that the Indians had crossed the river and were pursued by Capt. Ful[l]mer's Horse Company. About six p.m. Capt. Ful[l]mer with his company of horsemen returned bringing in two Indians, an old brave and a boy about 12 whom they had hauled up in the race. The oxen they had wounded were favorites with our family and had been in our service ever since we left Nauvoo and had travelled the road from there to the Gt Salt Lake Valley three times over. They were at present owned by my brother who loaned them to me for the trip. They moved his family across the plains and mine; ever faithful in all bad places, perfectly handy and gentle, and willing to draw. I had formed an attachment for them that is hardly conceivable to exist between man and beast. And when old Balley goaded with eleven wounds came up to my wagon tongue and lay down groaning with pain and looking so wishfully to me for help, myself and wife could not refrain from shedding tears. After dressing his wounds, offering him feed, and giving him water which we had warmed, covered him with a buffalo robe. I felt that I could inflict almost any punishment on the head of his savage enemies, but when I come to see them two thirds naked (thermometer below zero) half-starved and more than a third scared to death, first thing I did was to give them some bread to eat and place them under guard until morning. . . . Thermometer at 6 pm 5° below zero. The middle of the day was very pleasant.

Friday, December 27th

Thermometer 8° below zero. In the morning I found the ox Balley must die, so I ordered him to be knocked in the head, out of his misery. I showed him to the Indian and in an angry manner told him he was the scoundrel that had shot it; he denied it, but turned very pale for a Red man, and set up an Indian cry for the ox. I told him it was too late to cry, but if he would let me have the Boy, he might have the ox to which he readily agreed. I told him the Boy should be well fed, comfortably clothed, and made a man of if he would be a good boy. The Indian said he wanted to see him dressed like a white man, on his return. I told Br. Empey⁸ he could take the Boy for the present and take care of him. The Indian, pointing at Br. Empey, told the Boy that was his Father. The Boy immediately followed Br. Empey seeming much pleased. Br. Empey took of his clothes and gave them to the Indian, and clothed him in his presence and gave the old Indian a shirt. I told the Indian that he and his band must leave off killing our cattle as we passed or they would all be destroyed as the white men would not bear it. Br. Thos Wheeler interpreted the Utah Language entirely to our satisfaction. Camp moved about nine miles over a Range of Mountains.

⁸ William Empey (1808-1890).