

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE CHURCH HISTORIAN
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY 1, UTAH

November 19, 1956

Mrs. Madeline E. Fletcher
2312 Pleasanton
Boise, Idaho

Dear Mrs. Fletcher:

The article pertaining to the death of Mrs. Benson was published in the Deseret News for July 30, 1853, page 4. It is pasted into our Journal History under date of June 25, 1853, in connection with another item, but the following is all that is given in connection with her death:

"Sister Mary Benson, wife of Jerome Benson aged 41 yrs. 11 months 7 days, was drowned on the 9th of June, attempting to cross from the bank to a portion of the bridge, on a log. Bro. Alanson Norton was leading her, and was drawn into the water at the same time, and came near drowning. Sister Benson has left eight children and numerous relatives. She joined the Church February 8th, 1832, was driven with the Saints from Jackson County in 1833, and was with them in their persecutions to the end. She has gone to rest with the faithful, to come forth in the first resurrection."

We find no other references that will add any information to this drowning.

The group of early Mormons to which you refer in Grove Township, Pottawattamie Co., Iowa, seem to be a group of people who apostatized from the church and joined up with what became the Reorganized Church. W. W. Blair and E. W. Briggs were prominent in the organization of that Church, which has its headquarters at Independence, Missouri.

There would be very little in this office in the way of genealogical information. However, there is an organization which may have some genealogical data on the families in which you are interested. That organization is the Genealogical Society, 80 North Main, Salt Lake City. Should you desire to do further research on these names we suggest that you visit that office and utilize their files.

Sincerely,


Earl E. Olson
Librarian

FORT BENSON

In 1854 one Jerome Benson, who had been connected with the Mormons, but who had left the church, came to San Bernardino and located on a piece of land three miles southeast of the city--now known as the Ambrose Hunt place. The Mormon Elders were not anxious to sell him land, as they were inclined to shut out anyone from whom they might expect opposition. Benson believed that he had located on government land, as the grant had not then been definitely surveyed. Later it was found that he was on the grant, and the owners ordered him off, and on his refusal it is said ordered the sheriff to eject him. Benson had sympathizers, and he called upon them to assist him. F. B. Van Leuven and others who had identified themselves with the Independents, helped him to throw up earth works in front of his house, and armed themselves for resistance. The cannon was brought over from San Bernardino and the flagpole that had been used for the Fourth of July celebration was planted on the fort and the stars and stripes raised. The party had powder, but no balls for the cannon, so it was loaded with small rocks and ammunition. There is no authentic record of any fight here, although it is stated by some of the old settlers that the Sheriff, accompanied by a party of men, did come out, but one explosion of the cannon full of rocks decided them to withdraw. at any rate Benson was left in possession of the land and was subsequently able to give a clear title to it.

The feeling between the two parties in the settlement was augmented by many things. There were various conflicts at the polls which left hard feelings. One of the most active opponents to the church control of affairs civil and political was William McDonald, who had been a resident of the place for several years. So strong had the feeling grown between him and his neighbors of the church party that in the spring of 1847 he determined to remove to Los Angeles, or some other point, where he would be more in harmony with his surroundings. But some of the opposing party were determined not to allow him to depart in peace. One Marion Perkins declared that he should not leave without a threshing. On the day and about the time that McDonald was ready to leave the town with his family and household effects, Perkins, who was drunk and quarrelsome, made an attack upon him as he was crossing the street. Perkins had been making loud threats and McDonald had been warned of the danger. He was therefore armed with a knife. Perkins, who was a large powerful man, tried to throw McDonald to the ground and while he stooped above his victim, McDonald stabbed him to the heart. McDonald at once surrendered himself to the officers of the law and was locked in a room, as there was then no regular jail in the county. A crowd gathered and there were threats of lynching, but better counsel prevailed and the prisoner was finally left to be dealt with by the law. He was held to answer before the next grand jury, and was